

The English Voyages of the  
Sixteenth Century

PUBLISHED BY  
JACKSON, WYLIE & CO., GLASGOW  
Publishers to the University

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LONDON : SIMPKIN MARSHALL LTD.

New York - - The Macmillan Co.  
Toronto - - The Macmillan Co. of Canada  
Oxford - - Basil Blackwell, Ltd.  
Cambridge - - Bowes and Bowes  
Edinburgh - - Douglas and Foults  
Sydney - - Angus and Robertson

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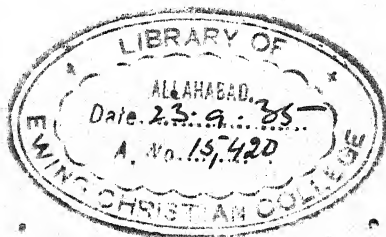
MCMXXXIV

# The English Voyages of the Sixteenth Century

By

Walter Raleigh

Late Professor of English Literature in the University of Oxford



Glasgow

Jackson, Wylie & Co.

Publishers to the University

1934

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*First printed as introduction to Messrs. MacLehose's  
Edition of Hakluyt's Voyages, April, 1905.*

*Revised and reissued separately 1906.*

*Reprinted 1910, 1921, 1926, 1928, 1934.*

I

THE VOYAGERS



# The English Voyages of the Sixteenth Century

## I

'THE great prose epic of the modern English nation' is itself but an incident or episode in a greater and wider world-drama. The discovery and settlement of America by the western peoples of Europe is the last act in a play which began in the cradle of the Aryans and which unrolls its vast theme leisurely, observing none of the unities. In this historical pageant the hero is often changed ; one nation after another presses to the front and draws to itself the eyes of all spectators ; one after another falls from its pre-eminence and yields its place to a new-comer. For many ages the light which permits us to follow the fortunes

The Epic  
of the  
Voyages.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

- of humanity is focussed on the Mediterranean ; we witness the struggle of conflicting civilisations, the rise and fall of the monarchies of the East, the passionate and lyrical intrusion of the Greek on the slowly unfolding plot, the rivalry of Roman and Phœnician, and the grouping of the actors under the spell of Rome in a towering world-polity. But the group falls asunder almost before it is completed ; the interest of the action shifts from the centre of the stage, and a new purpose declares itself. There is confused fighting of Saracen with Christian, the decorum of place and time is no longer observed, alarums and excursions and the breathless tales of messengers disturb the even development of the story, until, as on the stage which vexed the soul of Sir Philip Sidney, 'you shall have Asia of the one side, and Affrick of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the Player, when he cometh in, must ever begin with telling where he is ; or else the tale will not be conceived.' When the Island race makes its late appearance among the heroes of this romantic drama, the tale it has to

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tell is the diffused and exciting tale embodied in *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, compiled by Richard Hakluyt.

Like the drama to which it belongs, the compilation of Hakluyt has seemed to some critics to be lacking in form and unity. Here are voyages and travels to all parts of the world, prosecuted through many ages, undertaken by all kinds of adventurers, and animated by the most divers purposes. Men have travelled, as they have lived, for religion, for wealth, for knowledge, for pleasure, for power and the overthrow of rivals. Yet no very profound acquaintance with Hakluyt's book is needed to discern, as he clearly discerned, the single thread of interest running through all these pilgrimages. The discovery of the new Western World followed, as an incidental consequence, from the long struggle of the nations of Europe for commercial supremacy and the control of the traffic with the East. In all the dreams of the politicians and merchants, sailors and geographers, who pushed back the limits of the

The  
Quest of  
the Far  
East.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Venice  
and  
Genoa.

unknown world, there is the same glitter of gold and precious stones, the same odour of far-fetched spices. While the main trade routes to the East still lay overland, the maritime states of Italy, Genoa and Venice, held the keys of that traffic. By their rivalry navigation was improved; the mariner's compass came into general use early in the Fifteenth Century; and although the power of Genoa was broken by the surrender of her fleet at Chiozza in 1380, her ancient enemy was not left for long in undisputed possession. Beyond the gates of the Mediterranean a new rival arose; and during

Portugal.

the whole of the Fifteenth Century, the Portuguese, having learned their craft from the Italians, were steadily creeping down the western coast of Africa, rounding capes, discovering islands, making maps and charts, always with the same hope of finding a new and safer passage to the markets of the East. In the year 1410 Prince Henry the Navigator, a younger son of King John I of Portugal, began his systematic explorations. His aims and methods were those which, in a later age, Hakluyt

## THE VOYAGERS

constantly recommended to the government of England. He established a naval college, and called to his service the best science of the time. In 1419 Madeira was discovered. In 1439 Cape Bojador was rounded, and, seven years later, Cape de Verde. In 1448 settlements were established on the Azores or Hawk Islands. So, step by step, advance was made, until, in 1486, Bartholomew Diaz doubled the Cape of Good Hope, and in 1498, five and a half years after the first voyage of Columbus, Vasco da Gama crossed the Indian Ocean and cast anchor on the coast of Malabar. Thus the way was opened by sea to China and Japan, and the Portuguese, by their own labours, and by the Papal Bull of Pope Martin V, granted in 1444, came into possession of all the lands they had visited, as far as the Indies.

Portuguese  
Voyagers.

To a Spaniard of the later Fifteenth Century Spain, the politics of Europe must have worn something the same aspect that they wore for an Englishman of the Sixteenth. The world had been divided among rival claimants, and his country had been left portionless. But it was



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

not by the genius of a Spaniard that the balance was redressed. Christopher Columbus, a Genoese, who had passed his youth in the commerce and wars of the Mediterranean, settled in Lisbon about 1470, married the daughter of one of Prince Henry's men, and devoted himself to map-making and the study of navigation, diversified by occasional cruises to the coast of Guinea. At Lisbon, which was the headquarters of the best and latest school of navigation, he was kept in touch with the progress of Portuguese discovery, and must have learned all there was to know concerning the difficulties and dangers of the circumnavigation of Africa, and the hopes that inspired the Portuguese in their unceasing efforts. He was a dreamer, a grave and pious man, of a simple mind, and great tenacity of imagination. To him there came the idea that Cathay, the ultimate goal of all Eastern travel, and Cipangu, 'the richest island in the world for gold and spices,' might best be reached by striking directly across the trackless Atlantic. Memories of his reading, whether in boyhood at the

The  
Scheme of  
Columbus.

## THE VOYAGERS

University of Pavia, or in the hours of study stolen from an active life, confirmed him, by the opinions of the Ancients, and the mistakes of mediaeval geographers, in his belief that the width of the Atlantic was easily passable, and that on the other side, over against the coast of Spain, lay the fabled riches of China and Japan. He planned his voyage across the Atlantic because he believed that no such country as America existed; and he died without being undeceived.

The story of Columbus has been told a hundred times, and need not be repeated at length. His overtures to King John II of Portugal came to nothing, from causes readily intelligible and eternally operative in the affairs of this world. A great man's ideas are too broad and simple to be understood by the trained official mind. The King referred the proposal of Columbus to a council of bishops, astronomers, and learned persons. The fame of the Portuguese school of navigation stood high; the exploration of the coast of Africa and the use of the astrolabe at sea were among its most recent

Offered to  
Portugal.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

achievements ; and the school-bred geographers and professors of navigation were in no mind to listen patiently to the projects of a private visionary. Nevertheless the confidence and enthusiasm of Columbus made an impression on some of his judges, and, at the instigation of the bishop of Ceuta, a caravel was surreptitiously equipped and despatched to attempt the adventure. The seamen lost heart ; the attempt failed ; and when this piece of sharp practice came to the knowledge of Columbus he left Portugal, in 1484, to offer his services elsewhere. For years his scheme went a-begging. It was during this time, in 1488, that he sent his brother Bartholomew into England with an offer to King Henry VII. Bartholomew fell into the hands of pirates, and was long delayed in his journey, so that when at last he returned to Spain to notify King Henry's joyful acceptance of the offer, he was too late ; the patronage of Ferdinand and Isabella had already been obtained, and Columbus had set sail for the West. The pirates, in the pursuit of their calling, were 'the occasion,' as

And to  
England.

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Hakluyt has it, 'why the West Indies were not discovered for England.' The time of England was not yet come.

A striking contrast might be drawn between the two nations, Spain, which gained the whole credit and profit of the enterprise of Columbus, and England, which so narrowly missed it. A hundred years later, in the defeat of the Great Armada, the contrast was to be pointed, but already it was apparent. 'The English sailors,' wrote Ferdinand's ambassador at the Court of King Henry VII, 'are generally savages.' They were unchanged since the days of Chaucer, and picked up a living, without loss of temper, from a precarious coasting trade and adventures not easily distinguishable from piracy. The character of the English sailor is the most inalterable and valuable of national assets; while the British Constitution has moved from precedent to precedent, he has remained the same. His life is a hard one, but he takes it as it comes. He is untouched by the formal punctilios of the cavalier and the cankered scruples of the puritan. He is careless of the graces and ornaments

The ship-  
men of  
England.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

• of life. Though he has a warm heart, he is no humanitarian. Danger is his daily companion, and he has learned the lesson of Sir Edward Howard, that a seaman is useless unless he is resolute to the degree of madness. Above all, he is alert and serious in what concerns his craft. Of all professions, the sailor is habituated to subordinate himself most completely to the necessities of the work to be done. We know little of the English sailors of the time of King Henry VII. But we know them at an earlier time, and we shall meet them again later, in the day of their triumph.

The  
cavaliers  
of Spain.

When Columbus arrived at Cordova, in 1486, to lay his propositions before the allied monarchs of Castile and Arragon, he found there a Court and a nation little disposed to pay attention to nautical adventure. The campaign against the Moors for the conquest of Granada was being inaugurated with all the pomp and splendour of mediaeval chivalry. Decadent feudalism, trained in the stately formalities of Courts and the subtleties of Catholic theology, was to have the task of conquering and settling

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the West Indies. But the hidalgos and cavaliers who thronged with their retinues to the camp at Cordova had no foreboding of their destiny. Many of them were to be lost at sea, or to die miserably in remote islands, at the bidding of the poor man in simple apparel who was unable to gain a hearing from them. In the meantime Spain, with the infidel at her gates, cared little for the sea. The marvel is less that Columbus crossed the Atlantic, than that by his resolute importunity he secured the help of the Court of Spain. His scheme was little understood ; but in Spain religion is understood, and, by long cherishing, his belief in his mission had acquired the intensity and the elevation of a creed. It was this which won him the friendship of Friar Juan Perez, at the convent of La Rabida, and it was this which, in the end, secured for him the whole-hearted sympathy and support of Isabella of Castile. In October, 1492, he landed at San Salvador in the Bahama Islands.

By the conquest and settlement of Cuba and the West Indies Spain entered on her career as

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

The  
Bull of  
Partition.

a candidate for the dominion of the world. To avoid an internecine struggle between Spain and Portugal, Pope Alexander VI, who was a Spaniard by birth, issued, in 1493, his famous Bull, whereby the world was divided by a line running from pole to pole a hundred leagues west of the Azores, and all newly discovered lands to east and west of this line assigned in absolute possession to the crowns of Portugal and Castile respectively. For the next half-century both Spain and Portugal were busy in consolidating and extending their domains, little disturbed by newer competitors.

Italian  
Navi-  
gators.

But the tale of the nations was not yet complete. Venice, Genoa, Portugal and Spain were to be followed by France and England in the race for the Far East. Each of these latter countries, like Spain, owed its earliest impulse to the genius of an Italian navigator. One land sent forth the masters of the Old World and the discoverers of the New; though they were never to enter into their inheritance, they saw it with their eyes; and the beginnings of modern science, art, and civilisation are the

## THE VOYAGERS

debt of the world to Italy. In 1497, John Cabot, a citizen of Venice who had settled as a trader at Bristol, having obtained letters patent from King Henry VII, sailed with two ships out of Bristol and discovered the northern end of the Island of Cape Breton. As his expedition was believed to be the first to reach the mainland of America, which Columbus never set eyes on till a year later, much has been made in controversy of the priority of the English claim. But indeed in these timid beginnings nothing was further from the purpose of England than to enter on a contest with other powers for the possession of America. The success of Columbus had set the court of King Henry aflame with the promise that it offered of a direct route to Cathay, 'insomuch that all men, with great admiration, affirmed it to be a thing more divine than human to sail by the West into the East, where the spices grow, by a way that was never known before.' Shortly after this it was ascertained that beyond America there lay a halcyon sea, yielding direct access to the promised land. In 1513 Vasco Nuñez de

John  
Cabot.



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

The  
Pacific  
dis-  
covered.

Balboa, from a height above his colony at Darien, saw the Pacific Ocean; and in 1520 the Portuguese navigator, Magellan, rounded South America through the straits that bear his name, and sailed across the Pacific to the Philippines, where he met his death.

The  
French  
Voyagers.

From this time forward, for many years, the aim of European navigators was not to explore or settle America, rather to discover a passage whereby America might be avoided, and a way opened to the lands beyond. But the progress of investigation revealed no break in that great barrier. The French voyagers, who, like the English, followed the lead of a native of Italy, were long buoyed up by the hope of finding a better route than the Straits of Magellan, which were far south, dangerous to navigate, and, moreover, were in the possession of Spain. In 1523, Giovanni Verazzano, a Florentine in the service of King Francis I, explored the coast of what is now the United States, from Georgia northward, and of great part of Canada. He was followed by the brothers Parmentier; by Jacques Cartier, who in 1535 sailed up the St.

## THE VOYAGERS

Lawrence and discovered and named Montreal ;  
by the Sieur de Roberval ; and many others.  
To the earliest voyagers, as in the earliest maps,  
America was known as a chain of islands, and  
there was something inherently incredible in the  
idea of a great continent stretching North <sup>The  
barrier  
continent.</sup>  
and South over the tropical and temperate  
zones. When that idea was accepted, there  
remained a last hope, the discovery of a passage  
through one of the innumerable inlets of the  
North, whereby the nations situated in colder  
seas than those of Spain might redeem their  
disadvantages, and claim a share in the spoils  
of the world. It is at this point that the story  
of the English Voyages begins.

The actions that move the world have been  
prompted and inspired by dreams and visions.  
The search for the philosopher's stone laid  
the foundations of modern chemistry ; modern  
travel and geography owe their chief advances  
to the search for the fabled realm of Cathay. Cathay.  
Traditions and fantasies concerning the Golden  
Age and the Earthly Paradise are interwoven  
with all the practical designs of the early

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

The  
Earthly  
Paradise.

• navigators; and the poets of the ancient world are the true fathers of later science. So early as the sixth century the monk Cosmas, in his *Universal Christian Topography*, states the object of many a later quest. 'If Paradise,' he says, 'were really on the surface of this world, is there not many a man among those who are so keen to learn and search out everything, that would not let himself be deterred from reaching it? When we see that there are men who will not be deterred from penetrating to the ends of the earth in search of silk, and all for the sake of filthy lucre, how can we believe that they would be deterred from going to get a sight of Paradise?' All through the Middle Ages the dream held sway, and Paradise was sought in the East. Columbus, seeking it by another route, believed that he was near it when, on his third voyage, he came to the mouths of the Orinoco, and found a mild climate, green hills, fresh foliage, and a people light in colour and graceful in form. The earth, he explains, is probably not spherical but elongated like a pear, and on the summit of the protuberance

Columbus  
on shape  
of the  
Earth.

## THE VOYAGERS

is situated the Earthly Paradise, 'whither no one can go but by God's permission.' 'I think also,' he goes on, 'that the water I have described may proceed from it, though it be far off, and that stopping at the place I have just left, it forms this lake. There are great indications of this being the terrestrial paradise, for its site coincides with the opinion of the holy and wise theologians whom I have mentioned; and moreover, the other evidences agree with the supposition, for I have never either read or heard of fresh water coming in so large a quantity, in close conjunction with the water of the sea; the idea is also corroborated by the blandness of the temperature; and if the water of which I speak does not proceed from the Earthly Paradise, it appears to be still more marvellous, for I do not believe that there is any river in the world so large or so deep.' Whether approached by the East or by the West, this Earthly Paradise was to be sought, all were agreed, in the neighbourhood of Cathay.

This great kingdom of the East had long been dimly known as an object of curiosity and

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Franciscan Missionaries.

wonder. By the revival of Christianity at the time of St. Francis and St. Dominic a great impulse was given to missionary travel, and the marvellous tales brought back by wandering friars took a firm hold on the imagination of Europe. Rubruquis, a Flemish Franciscan, who, about the middle of the thirteenth century, was sent by St. Louis on a mission to the Tartar chiefs, brought back the report that 'there is a certain province on the other side of Cathay, and whatever a man's age be when he enters that province he never gets any older.' The friar is careful to add that he does not believe a word of this report, but it found credence from others, and so late as 1512 Juan Ponce de Leon, an old Spanish cavalier, Governor of Puerto Rico, landed in Florida while he was cruising in search of a country alleged to contain a miraculous Fountain of Youth. Besides Rubruquis there were other friars whose accounts of the East were well known to later explorers. John of Plano Carpini in the Thirteenth Century was followed later by John of Monte Corvino, who passed many years of his life

The Fountain of Youth.

## THE VOYAGERS

at the Court of the Grand Khan of Cathay, founded a flourishing Christian community, built a church, and was made Archbishop of Cambalu, or Pekin. Odoric of Pordenone was, like these, a Franciscan ; his residence at Pekin belongs to the early part of the Fourteenth Century. The reports brought by these travellers of the survival of some remnants of Nestorian Christianity in the East lent colour to the legend of Prester John, the mythical Christian potentate, who continued to be an object of research down to the time of the Portuguese voyages. The greatest of all mediaeval travellers, Marco Polo, who spent a quarter of a century, from 1271 to 1295, in the East, was a Venetian of a noble merchant family, and did more perhaps than any other writer to excite interest in the glories of Cathay. The accounts given by Marco Polo and Odoric, long believed to be adorned and heightened by fables, have come to be recognised as veracious and exact narratives, erring here and there only from natural misconceptions. Their descriptions of the Great Khan's Court, of the magnificence

Marco  
Polo.

Kubla  
Khan.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

of his retinue, and the resources and extent of his Empire, might well excite Western curiosity and stimulate the efforts of voyagers. It was not without reason that Hakluyt included in his compilation the stories of some of these Eastern travellers; without them his epic would lack its true beginning. The travels of Marco Polo were too well known to be inserted, but they are essential to the completeness of the book.

The quest of Cathay, then, is the main theme of this long poem of adventure; it is the purpose and soul of centuries of travel. But the theme is diversified with episodes and digressions and underplots. The singleness of an enterprise is not necessarily reflected in the minds and hearts of all who take part in it. Men who left their homes, and sailed to an unknown world, were influenced by the most diverse motives, political or religious, commercial or scientific. In not a few cases the 'good unsought discoveries' made by the way caused the original purpose to be forgotten. The Letters of Columbus, at the outset of the history, foreshadow some later developments.

## THE VOYAGERS

Columbus himself was full of zeal for the spread of Christianity, and the increase of knowledge. But it was necessary to show that his expedition would pay its promoters in temporal coin. 'I gave to the subject,' he says in the account of his Third Voyage, 'six or seven years of great anxiety, explaining, to the best of my ability, how great service might be done to our Lord, by this undertaking, in promulgating His sacred name and our holy faith among so many nations ; —an enterprise so exalted in itself, and so calculated to enhance the glory and immortalize the renown of the greatest sovereigns. It was also requisite to refer to the temporal prosperity, which was foretold in the writings of so many trustworthy and wise historians, who related that great riches were to be found in those parts. And at the same time I thought it desirable to bring to bear upon the subject, the sayings and opinions of those who have written upon the geography of the world. And finally, your Highnesses came to the determination that the undertaking should be entered upon.' To add a whole realm to Christendom

The aims  
of Colum-  
bus.

The  
spread of  
Chris-  
tianity.



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

• was in the opinion of Columbus a sufficient object and reward. The people of the West Indian islands, he says, 'all clearly understand each other's speech, a circumstance, very propitious for the realization of what I conceive to be the principle wish of our most serene King, namely, the conversion of these people to the holy faith of Christ.' And again,—'Let the King and Queen, our Princes and their most happy Kingdoms, and all the other provinces of Christendom, render thanks to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has granted us so great a victory and such prosperity. Let processions be made, and sacred feasts be held, and the temples be adorned with festive boughs. Let Christ rejoice on earth, as he rejoices in heaven in the prospect of the salvation of the souls of so many nations hitherto lost. Let us also rejoice, as well on account of the exaltation of our faith, as on account of the increase of our temporal prosperity, of which not only Spain, but all Christendom will be partakers.'

The  
increase of  
Know-  
ledge.

To reinforce this magnanimous and generous motive Columbus quotes instances 'of what

## THE VOYAGERS

great princes throughout the world have done to increase their fame: as, for example, Solomon, who sent from Jerusalem to the uttermost parts of the East, to see Mount Sopora, in which expedition his ships were detained three years; and which mountain your Highnesses now possess in the island of Hispaniola; . . . Alexander, who sent to observe the mode of Government in the island of Taprobana, in India; and Cæsar Nero, to explore the sources of the Nile, and to learn the causes of its increase in the Spring, when water is needed; and many other mighty deeds which princes have done, and which it is allotted to princes to achieve.' Lastly, there is 'the recent noble example of the Kings of Portugal, who have had the courage to explore as far as Guinea, and to make the discovery of it, expending so much gold and so many lives in the undertaking, that a calculation of the population of the kingdom would show that one half of them have died in Guinea; and though it is now a long time since they commenced these great exertions, the return for their labour and expense has hitherto

The  
example of  
Portugal.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Columbus  
and the  
Indians.

Indian  
virtues.

been but trifling. This people has also dared to make conquests in Africa, and to carry on their exploits to Ceuta, Tangier, Algiers, and Alcazar, repeatedly giving battle to the Moors; and all this at great expense; simply because it was an exploit worthy of a prince, undertaken for the service of God, and to advance the enlargement of His Kingdom.' In consonance with these aims, the behaviour of Columbus to the natives of Hispaniola was ordered by the loftiest code of a Spanish gentleman. 'I gave,' he says, 'to all I approached whatever articles I had about me, such as cloth and many other things, taking nothing of theirs in return: but they are naturally timid and fearful. As soon however as they see that they are safe, and have laid aside all fear, they are very simple and honest, and exceedingly liberal with all they have; none of them refusing anything he may possess when he is asked for it, but on the contrary inviting us to ask them. They exhibit great love towards all others in preference to themselves; they also give objects of great value for trifles, and content themselves with

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very little or nothing in return. I however forbade that these trifles and articles of no value (such as pieces of dishes, plates, and glass, keys, and leather straps) should be given to them, although if they could obtain them, they imagined themselves to be possessed of the most beautiful trinkets in the world. . . . They bartered, like idiots, cotton and gold for fragments of bows, glasses, bottles and jars ; which I forbade, as being unjust, and myself gave them many beautiful and acceptable articles which I had brought with me, taking nothing from them in return ; I did this in order that I might the more easily conciliate them, that they might be led to become Christians, and be inclined to entertain a regard for the King and Queen, our Princes, and all Spaniards.' With this fair dawn of mutual courtesy, sincerity, and the traffic of honourable men, began a day of pillage and cruelty and devastation such as the world has seldom seen. Twelve years after the first landing of Columbus the five great tribes of Hispaniola were all but exterminated. Many of the Indians perished by the sword, many

The fate  
of His-  
paniola.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

under the lash of the Spanish task-master; others died of hunger in the mountains, or took their own and their children's lives, to escape from the cruelty of Spain. The successive names of the island—Hispaniola, San Domingo, Hayti—embody its miserable history. The gentle and generous designs of Queen Isabella gave way to a persecution worthy of the fierce St. Dominic, and when the Indians were dead, 'by sundry kinds of death,' the island was peopled with imported negroes, under whose government at last it fell. In the full Nineteenth Century, the gold-laced officials of the Black Republic have been known to retire by night to the mountains, to celebrate their magic rites, attended by human sacrifice.

The  
search for  
gold.

Presages and omens of this tragedy are to be found even in the Letters of Columbus. There are oft-repeated mentions of gold. 'You will say to their Highnesses,' he writes to Antonio de Torres, 'that I should have ardently desired to send them a larger quantity of gold, . . . but that the greater part of the people we employed fell suddenly ill.' Again, 'I think it will be

## THE VOYAGERS

impossible to go this year to make discoveries until arrangements have been made to work the two rivers, in which the gold has been found, in the most profitable manner for their Highnesses' interest.' Again,—'We hope, with the aid of God and with the washers that we have here with us, when they shall be restored to health, to send a good quantity of gold by the first caravels that shall leave for Spain.' And later,—'Though we have not sent home ships laden with gold, we have, nevertheless, sent satisfactory samples, both of gold and of other valuable commodities, by which it may be judged that in a short time large profit may be derived.' The pressure put on him to get gold, no matter how, was unremitting. 'With respect to the gold,' he writes again, 'which belongs to Quibian, the cacique of Veragua, and other chiefs in the neighbouring country, although it appears by the accounts we have received of it to be very abundant, I do not think it would be well or desirable, on the part of your Highnesses, to take possession of it in the way of plunder: by fair dealing, scandal

Provi-  
dence and  
the gold-  
washers

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

The im-  
portance  
of gold.

and disrepute will be avoided, and all the gold will thus reach your Highnesses' treasury without the loss of a grain.' In the same letter, written in 1503, he complains of the class of adventurers whom gold allures, and who make the voyage only for plunder. Yet Columbus, though he was disgusted by the self-interest and narrow outlook of these gold-seekers, did not fail to appreciate the significance and importance of a store of gold. 'Gold,' he says, 'is the most precious of all commodities; gold constitutes treasure, and he who possesses it has all he needs in this world, as also the means of rescuing souls from purgatory, and restoring them to the enjoyment of paradise.' His opinion, so far as it concerns this world, was to be echoed later by many a patriotic Englishman who urged that the strength of the King of Spain lay in his treasure, and that he could be most effectively attacked in the New World.

The com-  
plex signi-  
ficance  
of the  
Voyages.

So, as the drama proceeds, the plot thickens. He who would make an epic of it must follow a single strand of the twisted yarn. But this is work for the poet rather than the historian.



## THE VOYAGERS

The late Mr. Froude, with a poet's instinct for unity, chose to regard the whole story of the English Voyages as an aspect of the Protestant Reformation. Many other equally promising aspects invite a similar treatment. The fascination and the power of gold; the doom of the races of America, met by them with a tragic simplicity; the pathos of Christian missions; the romance of map-making; or the tardy growth, when all else had failed, of the idea of colonisation; these and many other things may be severally disentangled from the complicated web of history, and trusted as a clue.

History, which takes for its hero that many-sided creature, man, must reckon with all of these, and exhibit a stage where pirates, buccaneers, and slave-traders rub shoulders with saints and seers, where martyrs to science and religion are associated with politicians and misers; and where, to complete the disorder, most of the actors play many parts. It is permissible, at least, to simplify the problem by concentrating attention on the fortunes of a single nation. The history of the English Voyages is the most

The  
drama of  
History.



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

- important chapter in the history of the English nation, and the preface to the history of the British Empire.

• The  
begin-  
nings of  
English  
voyaging  
to the  
West.

During the half-century after the voyage of John Cabot, a period more than covered by the long life of his son, Sebastian Cabot, English exploration made but little progress. There were sundry expeditions, fitted out at Bristol, to the New-found-land, and some worthless commodities, as well as three natives of the island, were brought back and displayed to King Henry VII. The first of these voyages was undertaken by Sebastian Cabot, after the death of his father; he failed to penetrate the North, and coasted America southward to Florida. But this southern tendency, which might bring England into conflict with Spain, was not encouraged by the King; and when Henry VIII succeeded to the throne, Sebastian Cabot was relegated to the safer employ of making charts of the coast of France. In 1512 he went to Spain, and for the next thirty-six years, with one brief interval after the death of Ferdinand, he was in the service of the

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Spanish government. On the accession of Edward VI he returned to England, at a time when a fresh impulse was given to English navigation. But in the meantime the dominion of the New World had been strengthened in foreign hands. While Mexico and Peru were being added to the dominion of Spain, the voyages made by the English, under King Henry VIII, were few and profitless. In 1527 a nameless canon of St. Paul's in London, who was 'a great mathematician, and a man endowed with wealth,' fitted out two ships for Labrador, where one of them was lost. In 1536 Master Hore, a learned lawyer, took a company of a hundred to the same coast, whence, their stores being exhausted, they returned in a stolen French ship. It was to speak with the only surviving witness of this voyage, one Master Thomas Butts, that Hakluyt, at a much later date, travelled two hundred miles on horseback. But the most important document of this early period is 'the Book made by the right worshipful Master Robert Thorne,' in the year 1527, where the true policy of England is outlined and discussed

The  
progress of  
Spain.

Thorne's  
Treatise  
on the  
Northern  
passage.

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at length. Thorne, who was a native of Bristol and a friend of the Cabots, dwelt long in Seville, and his writings show traces of the later sententious courtly style which Guevara brought to perfection. In 1513 he exhorted King Henry to take the business of discovery in hand; fourteen years later, at the request of the English ambassador, he expounded his ideas at length. The world, he says, has been divided between the Kings of Spain and of Portugal, and he gives an account of the contested ownership of the Philippines, which he takes to be the richest prize of all. For 'the preciousness of these things is measured after the distance that is between us and the things that we have appetite unto'; moreover, the inhabitants of these spice islands 'set more by a knife and a nail of iron than by his quantity of gold.' But the way to these islands is barred to us. The Spaniards hold the westward route, by the Straits of Magellan; the Portuguese the eastward, by the Cape of Good Hope. The English have left to them but one way to discover, and that is by the North. If the seas toward the North

The way  
to the  
Spice  
Islands.

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be navigable, we may go to these spice islands a shorter way by two thousand leagues than Spain and Portugal, who have each of them more than four thousand leagues to traverse. 'And,' says Master Thorne, anticipating an objection which, forty years later, became a burning question of practical politics, 'though we went not to the said islands, for that they are the Emperor's, or King's of Portingale, we should by the way, and coming once to the line equinoctial, find lands no less rich of gold and spicery, as all other lands are under the said line equinoctial; and also should, if we may pass under the North, enjoy the navigation of all Tartary, which should be no less profitable to our commodities of cloth, than these spiceries to the Emperor and King of Portingale.' But the Northern seas, it may be objected, are blocked with ice; and the Northern lands are too cold for man to dwell in. To which objection Master Thorne replies in a single sentence, fit to be inscribed as a head-line on the charter of Britannia—*There is no land uninhabitable, nor sea innavigable.*

Perils of  
the North.

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The  
North  
East  
Voyages

It was in this belief, and in this heroic temper, that England set herself to take possession of her heritage, the North. The adventures to the North West had been but poorly rewarded; and for a time attention was turned to the possibility of reaching Cathay by way of the North East. At the close of the reign of Edward VI a Company of Merchant Adventurers was formed 'for the discovery of Regions, Dominions, Islands, and places unknown'; Sebastian Cabot, now in advanced old age, was made its governor; and in May, 1553, three ships, under the leadership of Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor, were despatched for the Northern coasts of Asia. They carried with them letters from King Edward VI, written in Latin, and opportunely addressed 'to all Kings, Princes, Rulers, Judges, and Governors of the Earth, and all other having any excellent dignity on the same, in all places under the universal heaven.' Willoughby and Chancellor were separated by a storm, and Willoughby, after reaching Nova Zembla, put back and landed with his two ships' companies

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on the coast of Lapland. Here they wintered, and here they all died of cold and hunger. Chancellor, with his single ship, had better fortune. He too was obliged to turn back, but he established friendly relations with the fisher folk in the neighbourhood of the White Sea, and, when news of the visit of strangers reached the Emperor of Russia, he was invited with all his company to the Court at Moscow. His account of the Kingdom of Muscovy led the Merchant Adventurers to concentrate their efforts on developing trade with Russia, and gave a motive to further voyaging. Chancellor himself was cast away and drowned on the coast of Scotland in 1556, as he was bringing the first Russian ambassador to the Court of England, but his work went on. Stephen Burrough, who had served under him, in the same year explored the coast of Nova Zembla; and Anthony Jenkinson, in 1558, went as far as Bokhara to seek for an overland route to Cathay. The last of the North Eastern voyages was undertaken by Arthur Pet and Charles Jackman in the year 1580. They sailed as far as the Sea of Kara, but the ice and

Richard  
Chancellor.

Trade  
with  
Russia.

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- fogs were too much for them ; Jackman never reached home, and the failure of the expedition cast grave doubts on the possibility of reaching Cathay by the North East. By this time, moreover, Frobisher's voyages to the North West had awakened hopes of gold to be found in that inhospitable region ; and Hawkins and Drake, by their exploits in the Spanish Indies, had begun a new era in English navigation, and given a new direction to English policy. In the excitement of these later developments the North East passage was forgotten.

When the North West attempt, after a lapse of many years, was again taken up, it led to far-reaching consequences. The only incidental gain of the North Eastern voyages was the establishment of trading relations with Russia. There was no word of treasure to be found on the frozen Siberian coast, no prospect of settlement there, and the voyagers came into conflict with no rival nations. The search for gold, the beginnings of colonisation, and the gradual entanglement of England in a death-struggle with Spain are developments intimately con-



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nected with the voyages to the North West. The  
Many of the seamen, North  
West  
Voyages.

Feared by their breed and famous by their birth,  
who were to be the terror of the Spaniards upon  
the high seas, had their hard training in this  
forlorn hope. When England found herself  
baffled in her efforts to escape from her ring-  
fence by way of the North, she struck South-  
wards; timidly at first, then, surprised and  
elated by her own success, with ever increasing  
vigour, until, after a few years, the small barks  
that cruised to Greenland and Labrador gave  
way to armed fleets, prepared to assert a right  
of way and a right of conquest in all the seven  
seas.

The suddenness and rapidity of this develop-  
ment might well surprise the world. The  
English naval power, like the English drama,  
seemed to be the growth of a single night. In  
either case, hidden causes had been at work;  
the power that startled Europe had long been  
nurtured in the quiet. Yet these causes are so  
obscure, and seem so inadequate, that it is  
difficult to put off the language of miracle.



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Queen  
Elizabeth's  
men.

Fuller frankly invokes a special Providence. 'Observe, by the way,' he says, in narrating the death of Captain Edward Fenton, in 1603, some days after Queen Elizabeth's, 'how God set up a generation of military men, both by sea and land, which began and expired with the reign of Queen Elizabeth, like a suit of clothes made for her, and worn out with her; for Providence designing a peaceable prince to succeed her (in whose time martial men would be rendered useless), so ordered the matter, that they all almost attended their mistress before or after, within some short distance, unto her grave.' However this may be, no language is extravagant to praise the deeds of the greatest generation of Englishmen, the generation of Drake and Raleigh, of Bacon and Hooker, of Shakespeare and Marlowe. If the names of Queen Elizabeth's men, the men born in the early part of her reign, or just before it, were struck off the roll of fame, England would be robbed of half her glory.

Sir  
Humphrey  
Gilbert.

It was one of the eldest-born of these, Humphrey Gilbert, the son of a Devon gentleman,

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who revived the North West project. He had been trained, during the years of peace, in that school of war, government, and adventure which gave Elizabeth the best of her servants. Under Sir Henry Sidney, in Ireland, he had spent years of warfare with the rebels, and for his achievements there was knighted. Thence he had passed to the Low Countries, where he headed a band of volunteers to give help to the people of the Netherlands in their struggle with Alva and the power of Spain. In these rough experiences of Continental war and Irish government Raleigh also was trained, and Grenville; while Hawkins and Frobisher were learning their elements in trade and piracy on the coast of Guinea. With all its evil lessons of cruelty and craft, it was a school that fostered reckless courage and self-confidence in its pupils, and gave leaders to all kinds of perilous adventure. During his periods of active service, Gilbert cherished, deep in his heart, the dream of Cathay. He plotted a North East passage with Jenkinson; and, when that scheme was thwarted, bent his studies to the

The  
School for  
Adventure.

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West. He repeatedly importuned Queen Elizabeth for assistance; and in a period of enforced idleness, about 1574, he wrote *The Discourse to prove a Passage by the North-west to Cathaia and the East Indies*; which was published in 1576, and begat the voyages of Frobisher and Davis.

Gilbert's  
Discourse  
on the  
North  
West  
passage.

Gilbert's argument is so full and reasonable, so fair in its treatment of objections, and so strong in its appeal to tradition and authority, that it is no wonder if many were convinced by it. America, he says, is an island, and was known by report to Plato and the ancients, who called it Atlantis. If it be joined at its northern extremity with the continent of Asia, how comes it that no civilised man has ever found his way to America by land, and that the animals of America differ wholly from the animals of Asia? Need makes the old wife to trot, and the Scythians and Tartars would have found their way there, if any way had been by land. The current of the sea, moreover, is known to run westward from the Cape of Good Hope, and on striking America is

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deflected along the coast to the North. If it found no outlet there, it would run eastward again to the coast of Europe, which it does not do; therefore there is a fair and broad waterway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, somewhere between the 62nd and the 72nd parallels of latitude. But if a passage had existed, it may be said, it would have been discovered long ago by the navigators of Spain and Portugal.

This objection is met in triumphant fashion by Gilbert. It is against the interest of these nations that a passage should be found; and he repeats a tale of Ulloa, that the King of Portugal gave the Emperor Charles V three hundred and fifty thousand crowns to leave the discovery unattempted. 'It is to be thought,' he adds, 'that the King of Portugal would not have given to the Emperor such sums of money for eggs in moonshine.' The pilots of these nations are now forbidden, on pain of death, to explore to the North West, lest they 'should beat the bush, and other men catch the birds.' The enterprise is reserved for the English, who have most to gain by it. And Gilbert concludes

The  
cunning  
ignorance  
of Spain.

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Gilbert's  
creed.

with a declaration of the antique Roman faith which inspired his life—'He is not worthy to live at all, that for fear or danger of death shunneth his Country's service and his own honour; seeing death is inevitable, and the fame of virtue immortal.'

The three  
Voyages of  
Martin  
Frobisher.

The influence of Gilbert's *Discourse* was seen immediately in the voyages of Frobisher and Davis. After a vain attempt to stir up the Muscovy Company (as the Merchant Adventurers were now called) to Western enterprise, Queen Elizabeth granted, in 1575, a licence to Martin Frobisher; the Court and the City stood in with the adventure, which was largely financed and controlled by Michael Lock, a London merchant of scientific tastes; and in 1576, with two small barks of twenty-five tons and a pinnace, Frobisher set sail. The pinnace was wrecked, and the barks separated, but Frobisher in the *Gabriel* reached Meta Incognita, or Cumberland's Island, made acquaintance with the Esquimaux, and partly explored the inlet to which he gave its optimistic name of Frobisher's Straits. The expedition was with-

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out substantial results in discovery or profit, and but for an accident, would hardly have been repeated. One of the company chanced to pick up, and bring home a piece of shining black stone, which the assayers of London tested and pronounced to be rich in gold. So Frobisher was despatched again next year, his small fleet reinforced with a vessel of two hundred tons' burthen, lent by the Queen. The worthless stuff he brought home did not extinguish the hopes of the promoters, and in 1578 he put out once more, this time in command of no fewer than fourteen vessels. But his success was no greater than before. His explorations were hampered by the quest for gold ore, and the outcome of his three voyages was the discovery of Hudson's Straits, much recrimination among the undertakers, and no gold. A fourth expedition was planned, but when at last it was ready for sea, the command was given to Captain Fenton, and its purpose changed to piracy in the South Seas. The return of Drake in 1580, treasure-laden from his voyage round the

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world, had cast a pallor upon Northern enterprise.

The three  
Voyages  
of John  
Davis.

The three voyages of John Davis, in 1585 and the two following years, were the last Elizabethan effort to discover the North West passage. It is a testimony to the geographical enthusiasm of the time that these voyages were undertaken in the very years when the Spanish invasion of England was imminent. Like Frobisher, Davis found a wealthy merchant patron and support in high quarters; like Frobisher, he was crippled in his explorations by the necessities of gain. Some of his ships were told off for cod-fishing and the fur-trade, yet he explored Cumberland Sound, coasted the West of Greenland by Davis Straits, and reached Baffin's Bay. By the death of Sir Francis Walsingham in 1590 he lost his chief friend at Court, but his heart was still set on the North West, and he took service under Cavendish in the following year, induced only by the promise that he should have the loan of a vessel to search for the farther entrance to the passage, on the back parts of America.



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Nor did he give up hope after the tragic failure of that voyage. In the preface to *The Seaman's Secrets*, his nautical handbook of 1594, and still more earnestly and fully in *The Worldes Hydrographical Description* of 1595, he expounds the certainty of a North West passage, and the gains that its discovery would bring to England. Davis was a single-minded seaman, whose life was given to trade and exploration while others fought with Spain; and the great idea that dominated him sometimes kindles his language to an almost poetic fervour. The North Pole, he says, is the place of greatest dignity in the world; and the people who dwell near it 'have a wonderful excellency, and an exceeding prerogative above all nations of the earth.' 'How blessed may we think this nation to be: for they are in perpetual light, and never know what darkness meaneth, by the benefit of twilight and full moons, as the learned in astronomy do very well know: which people, if they have the notice of their eternity by the comfortable light of the Gospel, then are they blessed and of all nations most blessed.

His belief  
in the  
North  
West  
passage.

The  
dignity of  
the North  
Pole.



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Why then do we neglect the search of this excellent discovery, against which there can be nothing said to hinder the same? Why do we refuse to see the dignity of God's creation, since it hath pleased his divine Majesty to place us the nearest neighbour thereunto? I know there is no true Englishman that can in conscience refuse to be a contributor to procure this so great a happiness to his country, whereby not only the Prince and mighty men of the land shall be highly renowned, but also the merchant, tradesman, and artificer mightily enriched.' His eloquence was in vain: and his later years were spent as pilot on the East India route, in the service at first of the Dutch and afterwards of the East India Company. He

Death of  
Davis.

was killed in 1605 by the treachery of Japanese pirates, to whom the Master of his ship, the *Tiger*, had offered hospitality and courtesy while the two vessels lay alongside in the Straits of Malacca. The North Western enterprise which had been the dream of his life passed into the hands of the Dutch, who were beginning also, before the century closed,

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to supplant the English in the trade with Russia.

The stalwart honesty and simplicity of the character and writings of Davis give a singular charm to his name and story. He was a man after Hakluyt's own heart, a fearless explorer, a trusted leader, an ardent student and professor of the science of navigation. He yields to none in esteem and zeal for his profession.

'Sith Navigation,' he says, 'is the mean whereby countries are discovered, and community drawn between nation and nation, the word of God published to the blessed recovery of the foreign offcasts from whence it hath pleased his divine Majesty as yet to detain the brightness of his glory: and that by Navigation common-weals through mutual trade are not only sustained, but mightily enriched; with how great esteem ought the painful Seaman to be embraced, by whose hard adventures such excellent benefits are achieved, for by his exceeding great hazards the form of the Earth, the quantities of countries, the diversity of nations, and the natures of Zones, Climates,

The praise  
of Navigation.

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Countries, and people, are apparently made known to us ; besides the great benefits mutually interchanged between nations of such fruits, commodities, and artificial practices wherewith God hath blessed each particular country, coast and nation according to the nature and situation of the place.' Moreover, Davis, almost alone among the English navigators of his time, believed sincerely in the mission of England to take the Gospel to the heathen. He was a student of the Bible, and quotes the prophecies of Isaiah concerning the salvation and union of the Gentiles. 'Then sith it is so appointed,' he goes on, 'that there shall be one shepherd and one flock, what hindereth us of England (being by God's mercy for the same purpose at this present most aptly prepared) not to attempt that which God himself hath appointed to be performed? There is no doubt but that we of England are this saved people, by the eternal and infallible presence of the Lord predestined to be sent unto these Gentiles in the sea, to those Isles and famous Kingdoms, there to preach the peace of the Lord : for are not we only set upon

The  
Christian  
mission of  
England.

The  
chosen  
people.

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Mount Zion to give light to all the rest of the world? Have not we the true handmaid of the Lord to rule us unto whom the eternal majesty of God hath revealed his truth and supreme power of Excellency? By whom then shall the truth be preached, but by them unto whom the truth shall be revealed? It is only we, therefore, that must be these shining messengers of the Lord, and none but we; for, as the prophet saith, "O how beautiful are the feet of the messenger that bringeth the message from the mountain, that proclaimeth peace, that bringeth the good tidings and preacheth health, and saith to Zion, *Thy God is King.*" So that hereby the spiritual benefit arising from this discovery,' he concludes, returning to his fixed idea, 'is most apparent; for which, if there were no other cause, we are all bound to labour with purse and mind, for the discovery of this notable passage.'

During the reign of Elizabeth, and for many years after, this scheme for the evangelisation of the heathen had no history. It was a stock

The  
evangelical  
argument.

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mined explorers, many of whom allude to the religious mission of England in cursory fashion, or plead for it like sharp Christian attorneys, with none of the fire and sincerity that shine in the eloquence of Davis. Hakluyt, who had the same object at heart, writing in 1584, was troubled by his inability to answer the Papist adversary. 'The Papists,' he says, 'confirm themselves, and draw others to their side, showing that they are the true Catholic Church because they have been the only converters of many millions of infidels to Christianity. Yea, I myself have been demanded of them, how many infidels have been by us converted? Whereunto, albeit I alleged the example of the ministers which were sent from Geneva with Villegagnon into Brazil, and these that went with John Ribault into Florida, as also those of our nation that went with Frobisher, Sir Francis Drake, and Fenton; yet in very deed I was not able to name any one infidel by them converted.'<sup>1</sup> Hakluyt was indeed hard put to

Catholic  
Missions.

<sup>1</sup>From *A Discourse of Western Planting*, written by M. Richard Hakluyt, 1584. This valuable discourse was first

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it to be driven to make shining messengers of Master Wollfall, who went with Frobisher's third voyage as chaplain to the hundred of the company that were to gather ore for a year on Cumberland's Island; and of Master Francis Fletcher, Drake's chaplain, whom, for his faint heart and double dealing, Drake solemnly excommunicated, causing a posy to be bound about his arm—'Francis Fletcher, the falsest knave that liveth.' On these two pillars of the cause English evangelical effort was fain to rest for the time; but it is to be hoped, says Hakluyt, that volunteers will soon be forthcoming. 'For those of the clergy which by reason of idleness here at home are now always coining of new opinions, having by this voyage to set themselves on work reducing the savages to the chief principles of our faith, will become less contentious, and be contented with the truth in religion already established by authority.' In a later part of the same *Discourse* Hakluyt throws a curious side-light on this question of

English  
chaplains

printed, from the MS. in the possession of Sir Thomas Phillipps, by the Maine Historical Society in 1877.

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The religion of the trader. religion. It is imperative, he says, that England should seek some new outlet for her trade, and some region where she may establish a monopoly:—‘the rather to avoid the wilful perjury of such of our English nation as trade to Spain and other of King Philip’s dominions.’ Before being admitted to trade at any Spanish port, the English are required to make oath, on the sign of the Cross, that they adhere to the faith of the Catholic Church of Rome, and they and their companies must attend mass on Sundays and Holy days. This they do; and thus ‘the covetous merchant wilfully sendeth headlong to hell from day to day the poor subjects of this realm. The merchant in England cometh here devoutly to the communion, and sendeth his son into Spain to hear Mass. These things are kept secret by the merchants; and such as depend upon the trade of merchandise are loth to utter the same.’

There was no English counterpart, then, or counterblast, to the devoted work of Las Casas and the Spanish missionaries. But year by year, as English trade to the South increased,



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there was a growing hostility to Spain, and a growing disinclination to accept her mastery of the New World. The merchant might feign submission; the buccaneers and sea-dogs avenged his disgrace by challenging and harrying the power they were soon to overthrow. And these men, though there was little of saintliness in their character, had a religion, and fought and suffered for it. It was a religion not wholly unlike that of the later Orangeman, a Protestant compound, made up of fervid patriotism, a varied assortment of hates, a rough code of morals, and an unshaken trust in the providence of God. To the heathen they brought not peace but a sword. To the Pope, whom they named with the Turk and the Devil, they wished destruction. For Queen and Country they would go anywhere and attempt anything. Their mission was quite unlike his 'that bringeth the message from the mountain'; they coveted the things of the Gentiles, and their purpose and methods are set forth, in imperial language, by Michael Drayton:—

The  
Protestant  
Buccaneer.



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A thousand Kingdoms will we seek from far,  
As many Nations waste with civil war;  
Where the dishevelled ghastly sea-nymph sings,  
Our well-rigged ships shall stretch their swelling wings,  
And drag their anchors through the sandy foam,  
About the world in every clime to roam;  
And those unchristened countries call our own  
Where scarce the name of England hath been known.

Colonisa-  
tion.

The North East and North West voyages failed in their primary purpose; and the men of peace gave place, in the end, to the men of war. But before the Queen and her Ministers recognised the necessity of an armed conflict with Spain, all pacific devices for the readjustment of the balance had been examined and patiently put to the test. One more series of these remains to be chronicled. The idea of colonisation, of appropriating some part of America as yet unsettled by the Spaniards, and there establishing a prosperous English community, whose imports and exports might benefit the mother country, received its first effective impulse from Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Already in 1555 Richard Eden had outlined this idea, in the preface to his translation of Peter Martyr's *Decades*. From Florida north-

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ward to Newfoundland, says Eden, there are lands 'not yet known but only by the sea-coasts, neither inhabited by Christian men.' His suggestion that England should take possession of these was not likely to bear fruit while Mary reigned and Philip governed. In his notable *Discourse* of 1576 Gilbert pointed not obscurely in the same direction. There are 'divers very rich countries,' he says, 'both civil and others, . . . where there is to be found great abundance of gold, silver, precious stones, cloth of gold, silks, all manner of spices, grocery wares, and other kinds of merchandise of an inestimable price, which both the Spaniard and Portugal, through the length of their journeys, cannot well attain unto.' What was to be the weakness of all early English attempts at colonisation is foreshadowed in his further suggestion that 'we might inhabit some part of those countries, and settle there such needy people of our country, which now trouble the commonwealth, and through want here at home are forced to commit outrageous offences, whereby they are daily consumed with the

Eden's  
suggestion

Trans-  
portation.

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gallows.' And this scheme might be carried out, he adds, 'without injury done to any Christian prince, by crossing them in any of their used trades, whereby they might take any just occasion of offence.' Hakluyt, writing in 1584, makes the same recommendation and supports it by the same arguments, which no doubt were intended to appeal to the Queen's well-known resolve to maintain peace. Portugal and Spain, he says, have found employment for all their subjects, so that these two nations breed no pirates; 'whereas we and the French are most infamous for our outrageous, common, and daily piracies.' By planting the coast of America, between 30 and 60 degrees of Northern latitude, we may provide for the unprofitable members of the commonwealth, and greatly advance English trade.

Hakluyt was by profession a man of peace; but there is little doubt that Gilbert would have been glad to be let slip at the throat of Spain. In a paper of 1577, probably drafted by him, the Queen is advised to prepare a fleet of war-ships under pretence of a voyage of discovery,

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and to attack the Spaniards in their cherished West Indies. When in 1578 he succeeded in obtaining a charter 'to inhabit and possess at his choice all remote and heathen lands not in the actual possession of any Christian prince,' the expedition that he fitted out was, in point of fact, diverted from peaceful purposes. He got together a fleet of eleven ships, and enlisted the assistance of many gentlemen adventurers, the most notable among them being his own step-brother, Walter Raleigh, who was weary of land-service, and desired to try his fortunes by sea. Feuds and divisions broke out at the beginning of the voyage; four ships refused the expedition; and Gilbert, intending an attack on the West Indies, fell across some Spanish vessels, and was beaten in fight. The second and more memorable adventure of 1583, in which he met his death, was of less ambitious design. Five vessels were equipped; the *Delight*, of 120 tons, in which Gilbert sailed as Admiral, the *Bark Raleigh*, of 200 tons, with its owner as Vice-admiral, the *Golden Hind* and *Swallow*, of 40 tons each, and the *Squirrel*, of 10 tons.

Gilbert's  
Charter.

His last  
Voyage.

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The purpose was to plant a colony on some convenient site near Newfoundland. The men proved disorderly and mutinous; Raleigh, who never took kindly to a subordinate command, deserted the expedition for some reason unknown; the *Swallow* was employed by its crew in piracy, and was ultimately sent back to England with the sick; and the *Delight*, after the failure of a three weeks' experiment in colonisation at St. John's Harbour, struck on a rock, and was lost with its men and cargo of mineral. But these failures and disasters were destined to give Gilbert his undying fame. Starting for home with his two remaining ships, he chose to sail in the *Squirrel*, which he had made much use of to explore the coast. 'I will not,' he said, 'forsake my little company going homeward, with whom I have passed so many storms and perils.' They met foul weather and terrible seas, 'breaking short and high, pyramid-wise.' But Gilbert was undismayed. The last vivid scene has been stamped for ever on the memory of his countrymen by the narrative of Edward Hayes. 'Monday, the ninth of September, in

Death of  
Gilbert.

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the afternoon, the frigate was near cast away, oppressed by waves, yet at that time recovered : and giving forth signs of joy, the General, sitting abaft with a book in his hand, cried out unto us in the *Hind*, so oft as we did approach within hearing, *We are as near to heaven by sea as by land.*' At twelve o'clock that night the *Squirrel's* lights suddenly disappeared, and she was seen no more.

Gilbert's last speech is his sufficient memorial : perhaps it was ringing in Robert Burton's memory, when, writing of the remedies for discontent, he paraphrased Gilbert's great saying, and embroidered it after his own fashion. 'So it is, Fortune favours some to live at home to their further punishment ; 'tis want of judgement. All places are distant from Heaven alike, the sun shines haply as warm in one city as in another, and to a wise man there is no difference of climes : friends are everywhere to him that behaves himself well, and a prophet is not esteemed in his own country.' Gilbert, at least, is esteemed in his own country as the pioneer of North West discovery, and the first

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who set his hand to the building up of Greater Britain.

Virginia. His work was taken up immediately by Raleigh. 'After a night of storm so ruinous,' the scene rises on a fair landscape and the innocent and gentle happiness of Arcadia. In the spring of the year after Gilbert's disaster, Raleigh despatched two small ships, under Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlow, to prospect the coast of America, from Florida northwards, with a view to a permanent colony. They had a prosperous voyage by way of the Canary Islands, and reached the continent in the latitude of North Carolina. Here they landed on the Islands of Wocoken and Roanoak, taking possession of the land in the Queen's name and establishing relations of the most friendly kind with the natives. Their description of the country, fertile and luxuriant to the water's edge, and of their joyous reception by the Indians, makes the dreams of pastoral poets seem true. 'We found the people,' they report, 'most gentle, loving, and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and such as live after the

The  
people  
of the  
Golden  
Age.



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manner of the Golden Age.' The King, or chief, being absent, his brother, with a retinue, received the visitors, and showed them every possible courtesy. 'When we came to the shore to him,' says Captain Barlow, 'with our weapons, he never moved from his place, nor any of the other four, nor never mistrusted any harm to be offered from us; but, sitting still, he beckoned us to come and sit by him, which we performed; and, being set, he made all signs of joy and welcome, striking on his head and his breast and afterwards on ours, to shew we were all one, smiling and making shew the best he could of love and familiarity.' 'He was very just of his promise'; the narrator goes on, 'for many times we delivered him merchandise upon his word, but ever he came within the day and performed his promise.' He loaded the voyagers with gifts; and his wife, who was equally hospitable, tended them in her house. Indian courtesy. 'While we were at meat there came in at the gates two or three men with their bows and arrows from hunting, whom when we espied, we began to look one towards another, and



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- offered to reach our weapons : but as soon as she espied our mistrust, she was very much moved, and caused some of her men to run out, and take away their bows and arrows and break them, and withal beat the poor fellows out of the gate again. When we departed in the evening and would not tarry all night, she was very sorry, and gave us into our boat our supper half-dressed, pots and all, and brought us to our boat side, in which we lay all night, removing the same a pretty distance from the shore. She perceiving our jealousy was much grieved, and sent divers men and thirty women to sit all night on the bank-side by us, and sent us into our boats fine mats to cover us from the rain, using very many words to intreat us to rest in their houses. But because we were few men, and if we had miscarried the voyage had been in very great danger, we durst not adventure anything, although there was no cause of doubt ; for a more kind and loving people there cannot be found in the world, as far as we have hitherto had trial.'

Who does not recognise, in this description

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of native humanity and delicate courtesy, the beginning of an oft-repeated drama, played to its bitter end in Hispaniola, in North America, and in many an island of the South Seas?

The report of the captains pleased Queen Elizabeth, who stood god-mother to the new colony, naming it Virginia; and in 1585 Raleigh furnished a fleet of seven ships to go and take effective possession. There was some question of trusting the command of the venture to Sir Philip Sidney, who longed to escape from the fetters of the Court; but the Queen would not relax her hold, and the choice fell on Sir Richard Grenville, Raleigh's cousin, as Admiral, with Ralph Lane as Governor of the colony. Had Sidney gone, it is possible that the whole course of the history of Virginia and of North America might have been changed. But Sidney was to die, a year later, as Zutphen, and that ever-memorable and heroic fire-eater, Sir Richard Grenville, was to work his will on the people of the Golden Age. He spent the summer in exploring the islands, dragooning the natives, and burning their crops and houses;

The first attempt to colonise Virginia.

Grenville and Lane.

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on his way home with the fleet he fought and captured a rich Spanish ship. His right work was fighting, not civilising. Lane, who was left in charge, spent his time in gold-seeking and organising forced labour among the Indians. Before a year was out they were in open rebellion, and the business of massacre began. Thenceforward no help was to be had in sowing corn and catching fish; and the colonists rejoiced when Drake, on his way back from his famous West Indian exploits, lent them ships to go home in. A fortnight after their departure, Sir Richard Grenville turned up with three ships, and put fifteen men in possession, who were never seen again. Raleigh's last attempt was made in 1587, with a hundred and fifty colonists, under Captain John White. White himself returned to England the same summer, and in the turmoil that followed was unable to send ships to the relief of his colonists until 1590, when none of them could be found. A few were naturalised among the Indians, and when Virginia was at last planted, nearly twenty years later, seven English were found alive. 'It

Failure  
of the  
Colony.

## THE VOYAGERS

is the sinfulness thing in the world,' says Bacon, 'to forsake or destitute a plantation once in forwardness: for besides the dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons.' Perhaps he is glancing at Sir Walter Raleigh, to whom, it cannot be denied, some part of this guiltiness attaches. Raleigh was always impatient of the day of small things, and when his colony languished, made over his patent to a company of merchants, and turned his attention to El Dorado, the latest comer in the gorgeous pageant of his dreams of world-empire. The miscarriage of the Virginian attempt is the least magnificent of the failures that make up the story of his life.

So the voices that had counselled discovery and peaceful settlement were silenced, or were caught up and went to swell the clamour of war. For its first thirty years the reign of Elizabeth was, in effect, one long preparation for the great day. It is a time singularly barren, in the English annals at least, of notable political events. Events were what the Queen and her cautious Ministers, Burghley and Walsingham, most

The long  
Peace.

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The price  
of patri-  
otism.

dreaded. Their business was to hold on to the reins of power, to retard natural developments, to refuse action, to disclaim responsibility, to chasten the impulses of fervid patriots, and to avoid the open hostility of rival powers. The Government sat still, and deprecated all vigorous intentions, and waited. The Queen's fixed policy, her single resource for many long years, was to continue saying 'Peace, Peace,' when there was no peace. Her subjects were not slow to grasp the situation. They were free to serve the Crown, but it must be at their own risk. They might give battle to the enemy of their country and their religion, but they must fight in the character of pirates. If they won, the Crown would gladly accept a share in the spoil; if they lost, they knew what doom to expect. It is surely a high tribute to Elizabeth, and to the trust and love she inspired in her subjects, that they accepted these conditions without a murmur. They knew that the Queen had no care but the country, and that her courage was without blemish. They were content to let her work in her own way, so they might work in

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theirs. A Prince, in the high political doctrine of Tudor England, has no friends, only servants; and owes no gratitude, only acceptance or approval. When this doctrine was inherited, along with other great things, by Stuart pedantry from Tudor state-craft, it made clumsy havoc of the happiness of a people, and tumbled the Crown in the mire. But the hands that fashioned it knew how to wield it for the safety and glory of the nation. Towards the close of her reign, when Elizabeth was able at last to speak with kings in the gate, she spoke with the voice of England.

Tudor  
sover-  
eignty.

The meaning and interest of English history, therefore, during this long period of incubation, is to be found not in the doings of the Government, but in the unauthorised activities of the people. The political history of a country is commonly an affair of great dignity; it deals with the legitimate acts of the rightful government. But the great deeds of Elizabeth's reign were most of them unlawfully begotten, and were legitimated when they came of age. The volunteer efforts of the nation gathered

The  
Privateers.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

yearly in strength and volume; at last the Queen threw off her mask of indifference, and accepted the command. Until the time was ripe, she held sedulously aloof. The body politic was full of life, but the brain was careful not to know what the hands were doing. It is not what Burghley and Walsingham were writing, but what Shakespeare and Jonson were saying, that makes the greatness of the reign; not what the Treasurer of the Navy was commanded to do, but what Drake and Hawkins did without waiting for the Royal command. The public acts of the regularly constituted Government were tame and few. But the Queen knew what was going forward. The Catholic power of Spain, overshadowing and threatening Europe, was never out of her mind. She is sometimes accused, on plausible evidence, of neglecting

The Navy. her Navy. 'In February 1559,' says an excellent recent historian, 'she possessed twenty-two effective ships of a hundred tons and upwards; in March 1603, twenty-nine; practically therefore, she did little more than replace those worn out by efflux of time, for only two were lost in



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warfare.’<sup>1</sup> But, as the same writer justly points out, there was great plenty of pirates,—some four hundred were known in 1563,—and, by a merciful dispensation of Providence, they did far more harm to foreign commerce than to English. Twenty-nine ships is not a large navy; but when the Armada came, a hundred and thirty vessels were waiting for it in the narrow seas. The history of the Royal Navy under Queen Elizabeth is as little adequate to express the growth of national sea-power as is the history of the Royal Academy under Queen Victoria to express the progress of the nation in the Fine Arts.

The main policy of the Queen was, at any cost, to prevent disunion among her subjects, and to win their firm allegiance. She foresaw the dangers of internal religious disruption, and succeeded in staving it off. Her strength at sea depended on the loyalty of the irregulars; she kept in with the police, and did not fall out with the thieves. A wonderful good under-

The  
Policy of  
Elizabeth.

National  
Unity.

<sup>1</sup>M. Oppenheim, *The Administration of the Royal Navy 1509-1660*. (1896).



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standing prevailed between the two parties. When Drake came back in 1580, laden with pillage, from his voyage of circumnavigation, he was nicknamed by the people 'The Master Thief of the Unknown World.' His old friend and chief, John Hawkins, was then the official head of the Navy. 'The Queen,' says Stow, 'not yet persuaded to accept and approve his unknown purchase, paused a while, and heard every opinion, which at that time were many.' In the end she went aboard his ship at Deptford, and knighted him. By this act, with full knowledge of what she was doing, she cast the die. Everywhere her over-ruling hand was felt. If Burghley, and others of her statesmen, had had their way, she would have broken with France. 'For my own part,' wrote Lord Howard of Effingham, in the very year of the Armada, 'I have made of the French King, the Scottish King, and the King of Spain, a Trinity that I mean never to be saved by, and I would others were of my opinion.' The Queen was not of his opinion. She was a Unitarian in her attitude to France. It was a saying of hers 'Whensoever

Attitude  
to France.

## THE VOYAGERS

the last day of the Kingdom of France cometh, it will undoubtedly be the eve of the destruction of England.' The division of France would have meant an accession of strength to Spain. The French pirates and Huguenots had shown Englishmen the way to trouble Spain upon the seas; and Elizabeth approved their work. But the King of France, if he had lost control of his realm, would have been driven into the arms of Spain; and Elizabeth lent him her support. She isolated her enemy, and she united her people. She understood a free nation, and was worthy of the seamen who served her.

A more important thing than the actual number of ships in the Navy was its efficiency of organisation, and this was greatly improved during the Queen's reign. By the institution of the Navy Board, in 1546, Henry VIII had created the means of organisation. The practice of piracy made for the efficiency of the units. Long before an armed conflict seemed probable, English ships and English seamen were, as Mr. Corbett has shown, far superior in warlike qualities to those of

The  
English  
Sea Power.

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Spain. The ships were smaller, better designed, quicker in handling ; and they could sail nearer to the wind. The prime importance of gunnery had been learned by the English, and was to be taught by them to Spain. 'For the new school,' says Mr. Corbett, 'the arm of the sailor was his ship. Hitherto the offensive force of a war-vessel had been measured mainly by the number of boarders it could throw upon the deck of an enemy, and guns had been valued chiefly as a means of crippling his power of eluding this form of attack. But now the ship with its guns was itself the weapon, the captain the eye, the crew the muscles that played it. Already during Henry's last French war the power that lay in the broadside had begun to be seen by English seamen.'<sup>1</sup> Meantime the navigators of Spain had no thought of war. The Pope had guaranteed to them their new possessions, and they took their ease on the sea. Their great treasure-coffers were wafted lazily to and from the Indies, unprotected save by a few inferior guns. It was the enterprise of the

The ship  
as a gun-  
carriage.

<sup>1</sup>*Drake and the Tudor Navy* (1899), Vol. I. p. 137.

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French pirates which first awakened them to a sense of danger, and caused them to take precautions. The galleons of the Indian Guard, a squadron of twelve for the protection of trade, were sent out to the Indies for the first time in 1568, the very year that Hawkins first brought the Spaniards acquainted with English gunnery in the affair of San Juan de Ulloa.

Sir John Hawkins, who more than any other single man, was responsible for the rise of the war-spirit, came of a line of seamen. His grandfather had served in King Henry VIII's Navy. His father, William Hawkins, had been the first, in 1530, to carry on trade with Brazil. The voyage to Brazil was subsequently frequented, about 1540, by several wealthy merchants of Southampton. English traders were active enough during the early part of the century; it was John Hawkins who first taught them how arms might signally help the expansion of trade. He served his apprenticeship in the usual voyages to the West African coast, and in 1562 launched on a bolder scheme. By this

John  
Hawkins

His  
trading  
Voyages to  
the West  
Indies.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

time negroes were in great demand at Hispaniola, and Hawkins was determined to supply them. With the help of some city merchants, he equipped three vessels, and sailed to Sierra Leone, where, by force and purchase, he obtained three hundred negroes; then, with the help of a Spanish pilot, he crossed the Atlantic, and obtained 'reasonable utterance of his living commodities' in the ports of Hispaniola. He gained in exchange an enormous quantity of valuable merchandise; some of it he took home with him, some he sent to be disposed of at Cadiz, where it was seized and confiscated. Orders were at once despatched to the Indies that no English vessel should be allowed to trade there.

Hawkins intended to trade there. In 1564 he equipped a fleet of five ships, among them the *Jesus of Lubeck*, a ship of the Royal Navy, lent him by the Queen. He collected his negroes and proceeded with them, this time, to the ports of the Spanish Main. Negro slaves were much coveted; and by a mixture of persuasion and armed force he succeeded in disposing of

## THE VOYAGERS

them all. He brought back to England a handsome profit for those who had financed his expedition.

His third voyage, begun in 1567, is a date in English history. It brought him into open conflict with the Spanish galleons; it proved the weakness of the Spanish power; it settled him in his life-long enmity to Spain; and it baptised with fire the greatest fighting sailor of the age, Francis Drake. The father of Francis was Edmund Drake, a Protestant seaman, who, after performing a chaplain's duties in Edward VI's Navy, took orders and was given a Vicarage under Elizabeth. He had twelve sons; 'and as it pleased God to give most of them a living on the water, so the greatest part of them died at sea.' The eldest and most famous of them had been conversant with the sea from boyhood, and when his cousin, John Hawkins, was preparing this third expedition, he was entrusted, at the age of twenty-two, with the command of the *Judith*, a bark of fifty tons. The Queen contributed two great ships, and did her best to allay the suspicions of the Spanish

The affair  
of San Juan  
de Ulloa.

Hawkins  
and Drake.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

ambassador. Hawkins had more trouble than formerly in laying hands on his negroes, and much more trouble in disposing of them. The West Indian ports were warned and closed against him. At Rio de la Hacha Drake seized a Spanish despatch-boat ; Hawkins took the town by assault, and held it while he disposed of his negroes to purchasers who came in secretly by night. Carthagená was bombarded ; and trade was forced on many a lesser place. Thus, 'making their traffic with the Spaniards as they might,' Hawkins and Drake found that the season of hurricanes was near at hand. Lacking other shelter, they resolved to take refuge in the chief port of Mexico, San Juan de Ulloa.

Elizabethan  
free  
traders.

Hawkins, it is true, held that by ancient treaty and the law of nations the English had a right to trade in the Spanish dominions. But the purpose of his expedition had been laboriously concealed from the Spanish Ambassador, and it had assumed a piratical complexion even on the coast of Africa, where several Portuguese slave-ships were seized and plundered. There is all the more reason, therefore, to admire the



## THE VOYAGERS

cool assurance of the English captains. They sailed into the harbour of San Juan de Ulloa, and anchored inside the island which protected the roadstead. Over against them, on the landward side, was a Spanish treasure-fleet. How Hawkins would have dealt with this does not appear. How Drake would have dealt with it, had he been in command, is fairly certain. The question did not arise. On the morning after the arrival of Hawkins there appeared in the offing thirteen Spanish ships, escorting Don Martin Enriquez, the new Viceroy of Mexico. Hawkins had guns mounted on the island, and was well able to hold the harbour. But he feared the wrath of the Queen, and would not take the responsibility of unprovoked war. So, after mutual defiances, the English and the Spaniards treated. It was agreed that the two fleets should be amicably moored side by side; the island to remain in possession of the English. To the Spanish commanders Hawkins and his company were no better than corsairs, and a treacherous plot against them was put in action. While the crews were entertaining each other, the signal

The  
treachery  
of the  
Spaniard



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Sufferings  
of Haw-  
kins' men.

was given, the English ashore were murdered, the guns on the island seized, and the English vessels boarded. The *Jesus of Lubeck* was taken. Only by extraordinary promptitude and heroic valour were the *Minion*, which was also a Queen's ship, and the *Judith* drawn clear of the entanglement, leaving the three other ships to their fate. A terrific action followed, at close quarters, and the damage inflicted by the English gunners on the great ships of Spain was so severe that when at last the two English vessels got out of the haven, they were not further molested, though for two days they took shelter close to the port. On the first day of their voyage home they were separated; Hawkins, with two hundred men on board the *Minion*, was unable to provide for so large a company, and agreed to the proposal of a hundred of them, who volunteered to be set on shore in the Bay of Mexico, to shift for themselves. The miseries and persecution that these men suffered at the hands of the Indians and the Inquisition were narrated, years later, by the few survivors, and fanned the flame of English

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hatred for Spain. When Drake and Hawkins reached home, with their tale of Spanish treachery, 'military and sea-faring men,' says Camden, 'all over England fretted, and desired war with Spain. . . . But the Queen shut her ears against them.'

The Queen was not ready to face the great Catholic coalition in open warfare. She was struggling in the meshes of conspiracy. While Hawkins was selling his negroes in the Indies, Ridolfi was plotting in London; the Queen of Scots had arrived in England, to become a centre of disaffection; Alva was inaugurating his reign of terror in the Netherlands; and the Guises were putting in operation their scheme for extirpating the Huguenots in France. The Queen did what she could. She detained the treasure destined for Alva, which, conveyed in five ships from Spain, had been driven by French pirates into English ports; and she sent money and munitions of war to the Huguenots. This policy of hers gave a broad hint to her subjects. There was to be no war; but short of war, acts of hostility and reprisal were the order of the

Queen  
Elizabeth's  
difficulties.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

day. When the efforts of the King of Spain and Pope Pius V to stir up rebellion against Elizabeth became known to the maritime people of England, 'incredible it is,' says Camden again, 'with how great alacrity they put to sea, and how readily they exercised piracy against the Spaniards.'

Francis  
• Drake.

Hawkins was to take no further part, for the present, in these forays. He was needed for defence at home. But, as the Portuguese chronicler justly remarks, 'there was a certain Englishman, called Francis Drake.' At San Juan de Ulloa Drake had learned his lesson. The Spaniards were never to be trusted; extreme measures, such as Hawkins had shrunk from, were in the end the safest; a well-furnished English ship could go anywhere in the Spanish seas. For the next twenty years he put the lesson into practice, waxing bolder and bolder by success. When precautions were taken against the repetition of his exploits, he made precautions foolish by rising from height to height of daring, until the very wind of his name cleared the seas before him.

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In 1570, the year after his return in the *Judith*, Drake was back on the coast of the Spanish Main, where he robbed divers barks of their merchandise. In the following year he cut out a Spanish ship of a hundred and eighty tons from the harbour of Carthagena. To provide himself with a convenient retreat, he established a base in the Gulf of Darien, a natural harbour, far from any Spanish settlement. Hither he came in 1572 with two ships, the larger only seventy tons, and with seventy-three men. He entered into friendly relations with the Maroons, or hill-tribes descended from escaped negroes, who shared his hatred of Spain. With his diminutive force he surprised the city of Nombre de Dios, and, if he had not been wounded, would probably have emptied its treasure-house. He planned the capture and sack of Carthagena itself; then, finding that watch was kept for him at all the Spanish ports, he changed his plans, and transferred his operations from sea to land. The yearly produce of the mines of Peru was wont to be brought fifty miles overland by mule-trains from Panama to

His  
Exploits  
on the  
Spanish  
Main.

The  
Peruvian  
treasure.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Nombre de Dios, and thence shipped to Spain. 'By the abundant treasure of that country,' wrote Sir Walter Raleigh, 'the Spanish King vexeth all the Princes of Europe, and is become in a few years from a poor King of Castile the greatest monarch of this part of the world.' It was Drake's purpose to surprise and capture the treasure as it crossed the isthmus. He made his first attempt on the Panama side with eighteen men, all that were available of his original company ; but by an accident the mule-trains were alarmed and the attempt failed. Nothing disheartened, he joined hands with a Huguenot privateer and, aided by Maroon scouts, succeeded, near the very gates of Nombre de Dios, in waylaying and rifling the convoy. In order to fit out pinnaces for river-work he had dismantled his ships ; his homeward voyage was made in new Spanish frigates, of the latest design, captured by his pinnaces. During his

A year's  
doings.

abode in these parts he had disorganised the whole coasting trade of the Spanish Main ; he had taken the spoils of many vessels, had boldly entered more than one town, had diverted the

## THE VOYAGERS

steady flow of the Peruvian gold, and, as an earnest of what was yet to come, had seen the Pacific Ocean and vowed that with the help of God he would sail on that sea in an English ship. He arrived in Plymouth, after an absence of about fifteen months, in August, 1573.

It is to be regretted that these early exploits of Drake are barely recorded in Hakluyt's compilation, and rest on later authority,<sup>1</sup> eked out with Spanish State papers. Hakluyt, who was willing enough to memorise deeds of war, shows a certain tenderness of conscience with regard to sheer piracy. He was bound, moreover, to pay heed to the possible international bearings of his publication. In his 1589 preface *To the Favourable Reader* he apologises for his omission of the Voyage of Circumnavigation, and explains it on the ground that a collection of Drake's voyages was being made by another hand. He speaks somewhat slightly of Drake's great voyage, and offers no excuse for

Hakluyt  
and  
Drake.

<sup>1</sup>*Sir Francis Drake Revived . . . by Philip Nichols, Preacher* (1626).

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Drake's  
earlier  
achievements.

omitting the raids on the Spanish Main. Yet the greatness of Drake is perhaps best seen in these early buccaneerings. Time and again he is within an ace of irreparable failure ; time and again his incredible quickness of resource uses the material of his broken plans for a new and startling success. His spirits are at their highest when things seem most hopeless. His decisions are taken and his blows delivered like lightning. He makes a fine art of surprise, and escapes from difficulties by the unguarded way, the way of the impossible. A single purpose animates all his exploits, and the chart of his movements is like a cord laced and knotted round the throat of the Spanish monarchy. Withal he is an adept at dealing with men, French Protestants, English adventurers, Negro Maroons, or Spanish emissaries ; and carries himself in the pirate's profession with a courtesy, magnanimity, and unfailing humanity that give to his story the glamour of romance. Like Napoleon's Italian campaign, the achievements of Drake on the Spanish Main show a master at work, unburdened and unfettered as yet by responsibility



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and reputation, adapting himself solely to his material, and inventing at every stroke.

Drake's object was to drive England into war. The object of the Government was to keep a free hand. For some years he was hindered from further expeditions, and work was found for him in Ireland. But the Queen had a soft corner in her heart for him, and when the whirligig of time once more cast into the shade the hope of a peaceful understanding with Spain, she offered him secret encouragement. In the autumn of 1577 he started on the greatest of his voyages in the *Pelican*, of a hundred tons, (afterwards re-named the *Golden Hind*), with the *Elizabeth*, two lesser ships, and a pinnace, carrying among them a company of about a hundred and fifty men. His purpose, as he explained to the Queen, was to sail into the Pacific, and raid the Spanish possessions from the West. There was no word, at the outset, of sailing round the world. It is more likely that he intended to circumnavigate America, and to return by the North West passage, which, earlier in the same year, Frobisher had gone for the

The  
Voyage of  
Circum-  
navigation.



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

second time to seek. But whatever his plan, Drake was no longer the obscure buccaneer. He kept the state of a King; was served on silver plate stamped with his own arms, and was attended by musicians and painters. There dined with him at table nine or ten gentlemen of good family, who were in training for similar adventures, and he offered them delicacies, the gift of Queen Elizabeth.

Trouble  
with the  
gentlemen  
adven-  
turers.

The presence of these gentlemen was a chief cause of trouble on the outward voyage. If we are to believe one of them, there were fallings out and quarrels, and no one was certain whom to obey, because there were many who took upon them to be masters. The Elizabethan gentleman adventurer was the ruin of many an expedition on which he embarked; he was full of courage and initiative, but headstrong, giddy, and insubordinate. And this was not the worst. By the time the ships had made the coast of Brazil, taking on the way such booty as they fell across, Drake found cause to suspect that treason was at work, that an attempt was being made to induce some of the crew to mutiny; perhaps

## THE VOYAGERS

to become pirates on their own account. His suspicions fell on Thomas Doughty, a gentleman of good parts, whom he had met in Ireland, and to whom he had given a place of trust and honour in his enterprise. The rights and wrongs of this dark business are beyond our recovery. Drake believed, not without grounds, that Doughty had betrayed his plans to Burghley before starting, and was doing what in him lay to wreck the success of the voyage. Doughty, for his part, believed that Drake, being embarked on piracy, could claim no ultimate legal authority over his followers. At Port St. Julian, where Magellan, almost sixty years before, had hanged one of his captains, Doughty was tried by jury and condemned to death; and Drake, after receiving the sacrament with the prisoner, and dining with him by way of farewell, executed the sentence with his own hand. The speech that he made, a few weeks thereafter, still glows, in the imperfect report which has come down to us, with the passion of that tragedy. When the men were assembled by command in a tent on shore,

Thomas  
Doughty  
executed.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Drake's  
Sermon. Master Fletcher, the chaplain, offered himself to make a sermon. 'Nay, soft, Master Fletcher,' quoth he, 'I must preach this day myself, although I have small skill in preaching. Well, be all the company here, yea or not?' Answer was made that they were all there. Then he commanded every ship's company to stand severally together, which was also done. Then he said, 'My masters, I am a very bad orator, for my bringing up hath not been in learning, but what so I shall here speak, let any man take notice of what I shall say, and let him write it down if he list, for I will speak nothing but I will answer it in England, yea, and before her Majesty, and I have it here already set down. Thus it is, my masters, that we are very far from our country and friends, we are compassed in on every side with our enemies, wherefore we are not to make small reckoning of a man, for we cannot have a man if we would give for him ten thousand pounds. Wherefore we must have these mutinies and discords that are grown amongst us redressed, for by the life of God it doth even take my wits from me to think of it ;

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here is such controversy between the sailors and the gentlemen, and such stomaching between the gentlemen and sailors, that it doth even make me mad to hear it. But, my masters, I must have it left; for I must have the gentlemen to hale and draw with the mariner, and the mariner with the gentlemen. What, let us show ourselves all to be of a company, and let us not give occasion to the enemy to rejoice at our decay and overthrow. I would know him that would refuse to set his hand to a rope,—but I know there is not any such here; and as gentlemen are very necessary for government's sake in the voyage so have I shipped them for that, and for some farther intent, and yet though I know sailors to be the most envious people of the world, and so unruly without government, yet may not I be without them. Also, if there be any here willing to return home, let me understand of them, and here is the *Marigold*, a ship that I can very well spare; I will furnish her to such as will return with the most credit I can give them, either by my letters or any way else; but let them take heed that they go homeward,

The right  
doctrine of  
the Navy.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

for if I find them in my way I will surely sink them ; therefore you shall have time to consider hereof until to-morrow ; for, by my troth, I must needs be plain with you, I have taken that in hand that I know not in the world how to go through withal ; it passeth my capacity ; it hath even bereaved me of my wits to think on it.'

None of the company was for returning. Then he asked them whether they had any claim against him for wages, or would trust to his good will. They declared they would trust to his good will. Then he formally discharged from their command all the captains of the ships. Two of them asked him what moved him so to displace them. He asked whether they could give any reason why he should not do so. The explanation that he added of the origin of his voyage is of the deepest interest. The Queen, he said, was a party to it ; and he showed a bill of a thousand crowns which she had given towards the expenses. Walsingham was in the secret ; but she had strictly commanded that the Lord Treasurer, Burghley, to whom Doughty had revealed the plan of the voyage, should have

The  
question of  
Drake's  
commission  
from the  
Queen.

## THE VOYAGERS

no knowledge of it ; and she had sworn by her crown that if any one in her realm should send word to the King of Spain, they should lose their heads. 'And now, my masters,' quoth he, 'let us consider what we have done. We have now set together by the ears three mighty princes, as first her Majesty, the Kings of Spain and Portugal, and if this voyage shall not have good success, we shall not only be a scorning, or a reproachful scoffing-stock, unto our enemies, but also a great blot to our whole country for ever ; and what triumph will it be to Spain and Portugal : and never again the like will be attempted.' So, after restoring the captains to their command, and promising the men that he would pay their wages though he should have to sell his shirt, he concluded : 'For,' quoth he, 'I have good reason to promise, and am best able to perform it, for I have somewhat of mine own in England, and, besides that, I have as much adventure in this voyage as three of the best whatsoever ; and if it so be that I never come home, yet will her Majesty pay every man his wages, whom indeed you and we all come

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

to serve ; and for to say you come to serve me, I will not give you thanks, for it is only her Majesty that you serve, and this voyage is only her setting forth.'<sup>1</sup> So, willing them all to be friends one with another, he sent them to their business.

His bold  
policy.

This speech deserves to be set out in full in any story of the English Voyages. It is the speech of a man not in love with speech, whose thoughts are wrung from him at a crisis ; it throws a vivid light on the situation, and on Drake's manner of dealing with it. The troubles with his men, and the treachery of Doughty, had brought him to a hard pass. He must either admit himself a baffled man, or must take the enormous risk of angering the Queen by declaring openly his full commission from her. It is highly unlikely that he had any such commission in writing. What he counted on rather was her approval, and support against the Lord Treasurer's party, if he should bring his voyage to a successful issue. According to

<sup>1</sup> Narrative of John Cooke, in *The World Encompassed* (Hakluyt Society, 1854).



## THE VOYAGERS

his wont, he chose the bolder way; and from this time forward the failure of his expedition would have meant his doom, whether from England or from Spain.

The dreaded Straits of Magellan were passed in safety, and Drake was in the Pacific Ocean. Drake  
driven  
South.

Here a terrific storm, or series of storms, fell upon the ships. The *Marigold* was overwhelmed and lost; and the *Elizabeth*, separated from the *Golden Hind*, waited for a time at the mouth of the Straits and then returned to England. The two other vessels had been broken up or cast off on the coast of Brazil. Drake's ship was left alone to finish the voyage. The storm brought him the discovery that Tierra del Fuego was not a continent, as had been supposed, but that there was open sea to the south of it. And now his reward was near. The Pacific had been treated by the Spaniards as if it were an inland lake; their route to it lay overland; and the ships they sailed on it were built on its own shores. No enemy had as yet entered it by water; the ports were feebly guarded; and the crews of the merchant ships were very

The  
looting of  
the Pacific.



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

small. The *Golden Hind* was well-manned, and bristled with guns; the Pacific fell a prey to her. Her voyage northwards along the coast was a carnival of plunder, the richest prize of all being the *Cacafuego*, a treasure-ship bound from Guayaquil to Panama. Drake's ship was now heavy with precious metals, and the only question was how to get her home. He sailed northward, almost to Vancouver's Island, but was deterred by the cold and fogs from proceeding further. Turning to the south again, along the coast of California, he put into a bay near San Francisco, repaired his ship, and was solemnly crowned by the Indians as their king. He named the district 'New Albion,' and nailed a sixpence to a great post, leaving it, with the Queen's name inscribed above it, for the Indians to worship. Then he struck across the Pacific, to the Philippines and Moluccas, where he entered into alliance, amity, and traffic with the princes of those islands; and so back by the Cape of Good Hope. In September, 1580, after an absence of almost three years, the *Golden Hind* sailed into Plymouth Sound. Drake's

Drake  
crowned  
by the  
Indians.

## THE VOYAGERS

first question, before he cast anchor, was whether the Queen was alive and well.

The Queen was alive and well, and his anxieties were soon ended. 'She received him graciously,' says Camden, 'and laid up the treasure he brought by way of sequestration, that it might be forthcoming if the Spaniards should demand it.' She was by this time storing a good deal of treasure on trust for the Spaniard. Drake was allowed to retain a rich share of the booty for himself and his men. The thing that troubled him most, we are told, was 'that some of the chief men at Court refused to accept the gold which he offered them, as gotten by piracy. Nevertheless the common sort of people admired and highly commended him, as judging it no less honourable to have enlarged the bounds of the English name and glory than of their Empire.'

His  
reception  
by the  
Queen.

The completion of Drake's voyage round the world marks the mid-point of his career. For fourteen years he had forced his policy on the government; and now he had gained his point. There was to be no further question,

The mid-  
point of  
Drake's  
career.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

during his life-time, of conciliating the good graces of Spain. By the failure of the royal line of Portugal, King Philip had acquired, soon after Drake's return, a new vast empire, and had more than doubled his naval power. Drake was now a knight, and a trusted naval counsellor. For fourteen years more he was to work in the open for the overthrow of Spain.

The Indies  
Voyage of  
1585.

The change is well seen in the equipment of his expedition of 1585. In place of the two or three small ships which had hitherto sufficed him, he sailed from Plymouth in command of twenty-one ships and eight pinnaces, with a force of more than two thousand men. Frobisher was Vice-Admiral, and their destination was the West Indies, there to waylay the Plate fleet laden with the wealth of Peru.

Defects  
of the  
buc-  
caneering  
system.

After an armed demonstration off the harbours of Portugal the fleet reached Santiago, which was taken and sacked, but yielded little treasure. The same disappointment awaited them in the West Indies. Despising smaller game, they took and held for a time San Domingo, the oldest town in the Indies, and Carthagena,

## THE VOYAGERS

the capital of the Spanish Main. The moral effect of these exploits was no doubt great, but the material profit was less than had been expected, and Drake, in order to indemnify the Queen and the other promoters of the expedition, exacted a large ransom in either case for the evacuation of the town. It had been a part of the original plan to seize Havana, but losses from sickness and war caused the expedition to turn homeward, not without a fair share of plunder. St. Augustine, on the coast of Florida, was looted on the way, and the miserable colonists of Virginia were visited and taken home. It is difficult and presumptuous to criticise Drake's plan of action. In his later expeditions he was hampered by the instructions of the Government and the opinions of others, as he had not been hampered earlier. He had proposed in 1581 to seize Terceira, and make it a naval base for harassing and plundering Spanish commerce. Many of his critics held, and some still hold, that he should have kept possession of Carthagená with the same object. But the profit-sharing system of naval enter-

Lack of a  
naval base.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

prise made a policy of this kind almost impossible; and to the end of his life the buccaneer in Drake held the upper hand of the statesman. If the English had established and fortified themselves on the main trading route of the Spanish Indies the story of the Armada might have remained unwritten.

The  
singeing  
of King  
Philip's  
beard.

It is unnecessary to touch, except very briefly, on what followed. The founding of Colonies and the exploration of unknown lands had given way to the necessities of war; and the history of Drake and Hawkins and Frobisher henceforward is a part of the history of England. In 1587 Drake was despatched with another fleet to make havoc of King Philip's preparations for invading England. It is from the realm of the Indies, says an Elizabethan sailor, that King Philip 'has feathers to fly to the top of his high desires.' Drake had singed his feathers; he was now to singe his beard. He took and burned the shipping in Cadiz harbour, seized Cape St. Vincent, threatened Lisbon, and struck terror into the heart of the Spanish commanders. When the great Armada

The  
Invincible  
Armada.

## THE VOYAGERS

at last set sail, Drake, if he had had his way, would have met and fought with it at the mouths of the Spanish harbours. But he was controlled by men who feared the boldness of his strategy, and the Spanish preparations were permitted to proceed in quietness. Let the rest be told in the grand style which reached its maturity in English at this very time, as if it had been designed for the deeds it was to celebrate. 'This great preparation,' says Bacon, 'passed away like a dream. The Invincible Navy neither took any one barque of ours, neither yet once offered to land; but after they had been well beaten and chased, made a perambulation about the Northern seas, ennobling many coasts with wrecks of mighty ships; and so returned home with greater derision than they set forth with expectation.'

The repulse of the Armada gave Drake no rest. The next year, in joint command with Sir John Norris, he led the expedition to Lisbon. They failed in their main purpose; their losses were heavy, and their booty small. 'But the truth is,' says Camden, 'England

Expedition  
to Lisbon.

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The last  
Voyage of  
Drake and  
Hawkins.

reaped this benefit by the voyage, that from this time forward she feared nothing from Spain, but took greater heart and courage against the Spaniards.' Drake fell into disgrace, and was restored to favour only to share with Sir John Hawkins the command of another expedition, their second and last. In 1595, twenty-eight years after their fateful adventure in slave-trading, they put out again for the Indies with a fleet of twenty-seven sail, and strong land-forces. Sir John Hawkins was now over seventy years of age, burdened and saddened by the long cares of administration; and the differences of temper and character between the two admirals had not been lessened by time. Thomas Maynarde, who served in the expedition, has left a vivid account of these differences.<sup>1</sup> Of Drake he says,—'It may be his self-willed and peremptory command was doubted, and that caused her Majesty, as should seem, to join Sir John Hawkins in equal commission,—a man old and wary, entering into

<sup>1</sup> *Sir Francis Drake, His Voyage, 1595: by Thomas Maynarde.* (Hakluyt Society, 1849.)



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matters with so leaden a foot, that the other's meat would be eaten before his spit could come to the fire: men of so different natures and dispositions, that what the one desired the other would commonly oppose against; and though their wary carriages sequestered it from meaner wits, yet was it apparently seen to better judgments before our going from Plymouth, that whom the one loved, the other smally esteemed.' When they reached the Indies they found the Spaniards forewarned and forearmed against them; and their voyage was an unbroken tale of ill-success. The Spanish sea-power was enormously increased, the towns guarded, the payment of ransom forbidden, and the treasure concealed, so that even if Drake had been permitted to follow his old methods, it is doubtful whether he could have averted failure. Maynarde, in conversation, asked him where were the rich places he had promised to his followers. 'He answered me with grief, protesting that he was as ignorant of the Indies as myself, and that he never thought any place could be so changed, as it

Its failure

The  
ruined  
Paradise.



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were from a delicious and pleasant harbour into a waste and desert wilderness; besides the variableness of the wind and weather, so stormy and blustrous as he never saw it before. But he most wondered that since his coming out of England he never saw sail worth giving chase unto; yet, in the greatness of his mind he would, in the end, conclude with these words: "It matters not, man; God hath many things in store for us; and I know many means to do her Majesty good service, and to make us rich; for we must have gold before we see England"; when, good gentleman, (in my conceit), it fared with him as with some careless living man who prodigally consumes his time, fondly persuading himself that the nurse that fed him in his childhood will likewise nourish him in his old age, and, finding the dug dried and withered, enforced then to behold his folly, tormented in mind, dieth with a starved body. To redeem his favour with the Queen, Drake had thought to repeat some of his brilliant early exploits. No good thing can be repeated; and this last voyage saw a dramatic reversal of his

## THE VOYAGERS

most fortunate achievements. His forces were repulsed at Las Palmas and at Puerto Rico. Here Hawkins sickened and died. They sacked and burned Rio de la Hacha, seized Nombre de Dios, and thence sent forward a land expedition to surprise and plunder Panama. The isthmus was held in force by Spain, and the English were beaten off. Drake's chief hopes were now shattered. 'Since our return from Panama,' says Maynarde, 'he never carried mirth nor joy in his face; yet no man he loved must conjecture that he took thought thereof.' He did what he had seldom done while his star prevailed; he asked the advice of his officers. It was resolved to make an attempt on Granada, Leon, and the towns on the Lake of Nicaragua. The course was laid for St. John's Harbour, but the wind was steadily against them; sickness broke out in the crews, and after some weeks' struggle, Drake 'resolved to depart, and to take the wind as God sent it.' He had been attacked by the prevalent sickness; on the morning of the 28th of January, 1596, he died, and was buried in the sea off Puerto Bello.

Death of  
Hawkins

Death of  
Drake.

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'He was as famous,' says Stow, 'in Europe and America, as Tamburlaine in Asia and Africa.' When the news of his death was brought, there was joy in Spain, and the people felt that the heavy hand of God had at last been lifted from them.

Other  
Voyagers.

The three great Vice-Admirals who defeated the Armada were now dead; for Frobisher had died in 1594, of a wound received at the work of dislodging the Spaniards from the coast of Brittany. The Lord High Admiral, Lord Charles Howard of Effingham, under whose command they had all served, led a great armament to Cadiz in the summer of 1596, seized the city, and inflicted enormous damage on the shipping in the harbour. He was created Earl of Nottingham, and lived on to an advanced old age. And how many more are there not, whose names are less famous, and whose deeds, recorded or unrecorded by Hakluyt, served to raise the name of their country? John Oxenham, Drake's follower, the first Englishman who launched a boat on the Pacific; Captain Thomas Fenner, one of three brothers, each of

## THE VOYAGERS

whom commanded a ship against the Armada ; Captain Edward Fenton, who explored the Arctic Seas, and harried the ships of Spain ; George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland, who made ten voyages in twelve years ; Sir William Monson, author of the *Naval Tracts*, who began as a common sailor on board a merchantman, and rose to be an Admiral ; or James Lancaster, who in the years immediately after Hakluyt's publication opened a way for English commerce to the East ;—all these deserve celebration.

And the sailors who manned the ships, who ate putrid penguins and drank bilge-water on strange seas, and who often, when their service to their country was rendered, pined in foreign prisons, or died by hundreds of starvation and cold and plague in the streets of the sea-ports of England,—they most pass without other memorial than the saying of the Lord High Admiral, 'God send us to see such a company together again, when need is.' They were a cheerful race ; and, as Drake says, when they were blessed with some little comfortable dew of heaven, some crowns, or some reasonable

The  
Eliza-  
bethan  
mariners.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

The  
Gentlemen  
Adven-  
turers.

booties, they would take good heart again, although they were half dead. Last of all, and among the most characteristic figures of the Elizabethan age, there are the gentlemen adventurers, the ambitious courtiers like Essex, the single-minded warriors, like Grenville, the spendthrift sons of fortune, like Cavendish, to whom the world was their oyster, which with their sword they must open. Never was there a set of men worse adapted for the sober business of establishing a colony, or governing a subject race; yet they too were servants of the Empire, and cleared a way for those who came after them. Long generations of training and many hard blows were needed before the British race learned those lessons of justice and tact and tolerance which every Civil Servant in India must have by heart, now that the round world is mapped and settled. Whatever their faults, these Elizabethans bear the stamp of the heroic age; they lived in an illimitable world, and had nothing about them of tame civility. They are arrogant, excessive, indomitable, inquisitive, madmen in resolution, and children

## THE VOYAGERS

at heart. The great fight of the *Revenge* was undertaken against all the rules of orthodox naval tactics, and in defiance of common sense.

Its hero, says Linschoten, 'was of so hard a complexion, that as he continued among the Spanish captains, while they were at dinner or supper with him, he would carouse three or four glasses of wine, and in a bravery take the glasses between his teeth and crash them in pieces and swallow them down, so that oftentimes the blood ran out of his mouth.' In his own age his action off the Azores was recognised as something out of the beaten path of history, and to be matched only by poetry in its strongest and highest flights. 'In the year 1591,' says Bacon, 'was that memorable fight of an English ship called the *Revenge*, under the command of Sir Richard Grenville, memorable (I say) even beyond credit and to the height of some heroical fable: and though it were a defeat, yet it exceeded a victory; being like the act of Samson, that killed more men at his death, than he had done in the time of all his life. This ship, for the space of fifteen

Sir  
Richard  
Grenville.

The Last  
Fight  
of the  
*Revenge*.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

hours, sate like a stag amongst hounds at bay, and was sieged and fought with, in turn, by fifteen great ships of Spain, part of a navy of fifty-five ships in all; the rest like abettors looking on afar off. And amongst the fifteen ships that fought, the great *San Philippo* was one; a ship of fifteen hundred ton, prince of the twelve *Sea-Apostles*, which was right glad when she was shifted off from the *Revenge*. This brave ship the *Revenge*, being manned only with two hundred soldiers and marines whereof eighty lay sick, yet nevertheless after a fight maintained (as was said) of fifteen hours, and two ships of the enemy sunk by her side, besides many more torn and battered and great slaughter of men, never came to be entered, but was taken by composition; the enemies themselves having in admiration the virtue of the commander and the whole tragedy of that ship.'

Thomas  
Cavendish.

Thomas Cavendish, who served as a volunteer under Sir Richard Grenville in the Virginian Expedition of 1585, is perhaps the most typical of the adventurous gallants of the time.



## THE VOYAGERS

Like Bassanio, in *The Merchant of Venice*, he had

disabled his estate  
By something showing a more swelling port  
Than his faint means would grant continuance;

and in 1586, encouraged by the success of Drake, he furnished three ships to go in quest of the golden fleece. His voyage round the world was completed in a shorter time than Drake's; he returned in September, 1588, soon after the repulse of the Armada. The nature of his doings by the way is well set forth by himself in a letter to Lord Hunsdon:—'I navigated along the coast of Chili, Peru, and Nueva España, where I made great spoils: I burnt and sunk nineteen sails of ships, small and great. All the villages and towns that ever I landed at, I burned and spoiled; and had I not been discovered upon the coast, I had taken great quantity of treasure.' This account is not complete. He also slaughtered the Indians, devastated crops and orchards, and wherever he could lay hands on the symbols of ancient Christianity, crosses and images, he destroyed

His  
methods.



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

them with great zest. His violent and petulant temper breaks forth in his last melancholy letter, written when his second voyage, undertaken in 1591, had failed, and he was a broken man. His crew are 'hell-hounds'; and John Davis, whose ship had been separated from the others by storms, is 'that villain, that hath been the death of me and the decay of this whole action.' Boastful and brave, careless of others, unflinching, unrelenting, unforgiving, Cavendish has yet that intensity and wholeness of purpose which is the pith and marrow of great deeds.

Sir Walter  
Raleigh.

The greatest adventurer of them all lived on into the next reign, to be a monument of the age that was irrecoverably past, and, by his death, to cast a stain (if anything so dark and small can take a stain) on the character of James I. Of all the notable Elizabethans, Sir Walter Raleigh is perhaps the most difficult to understand. He has the insolent imagination of Marlowe, and the profound melancholy of Donne. 'The mind of man,' he says, in his *History of the World*, 'hath two ports, the one

## THE VOYAGERS

always frequented by the entrance of manifold vanities; the other desolate and overgrown with grass, by which enter our charitable thoughts and divine contemplations.' Both gates of his mind stood open; worldly hopes and braggart ambitions crowd and jostle through one entrance, but the monitors of death and eternity meet them, and whisper them in the ear. He schemes elaborately, even while he believes that 'the long day of mankind draweth fast towards an evening, and the world's tragedy and time are near at an end.' The irony of human affairs possesses his contemplation; his thoughts are high and fanciful; he condescends to action, and fails, as all those fail whose work is done stooping. He is proud, sardonic, and aloof. His own boast is true—'There is none on the face of the earth that I would be fastened unto.' He takes part with others in no movement, and stakes little or nothing on the strength of human ties. The business of men on this earth seems trivial and insignificant against the vast desert of eternity; and great deeds alone are worth doing, for they, when

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

they perish, add pomp to the triumph of death and oblivion.

His pride. His political schemes are grandiose and far-reaching : the mere unfolding of them dwarfs the exploits of more practical men. Has Cavendish gained fame by plundering the Spaniard? 'It became not the former fortune,' says Raleigh, 'in which I once lived, to go journeys of picory ; it had sorted ill with the offices of honour, which by her Majesty's grace I hold this day in England, to run from cape to cape, and from place to place, for the pillage of ordinary prizes.' Has Drake earned praise and reward for his assaults on the Indies? 'The King of Spain,' says Raleigh, 'is not so impoverished by taking three or four port towns in America as we suppose, neither are the riches of Peru, or Nueva España, so left by the sea side, as it can be easily washed away with a great flood or springtide, or left dry upon the sands on a low ebb.' So he introduces his promise of El Dorado, the finding in Guiana of a better and richer Indies for her Majesty than the Indies of the King of Spain.

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The whole problem of English policy is admirably summarised by Bacon in his *Considerations touching a War with Spain*. 'For

Bacon on  
Sea-power.

money,' he says, 'no doubt it is the principal part of the greatness of Spain; for by that they maintain their veteran army; and Spain is the only State of Europe that is a money grower. But in this part, of all others, is most to be considered the ticklish and brittle state of the greatness of Spain. Their greatness consisteth in their treasure, their treasure in the Indies, and their Indies (if it be well weighed) are indeed but an accession to such as are masters by sea. So as this axle-tree, whereupon their greatness turneth, is soon cut in two by any that shall be stronger than they by sea.' Drake and the seamen had put this argument into action; Raleigh, though no one better knew the importance of sea-power, must needs give it an original turn. It is useless, he says, to cripple the Spanish navy; in a year the losses are repaired, and the King of Spain 'beginneth again like a storm to threaten shipwrack to us all. . . . It is his Indian gold that endangereth

Raleigh  
on the  
importance  
of gold.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

and disturbeth all the nations of Europe.' The way to defeat him is to appropriate a richer source of gold than any in his dominion. It seems likely that Raleigh was already chasing the phantom of El Dorado when he urged the settlement of Virginia. Then stories and fables reached him from the South American continent, and in 1595 he led his expedition up the Orinoco, and recorded his adventures in his tract, *The Discovery of the Large, Rich and Guiana. Beautiful Empire of Guiana*, printed in the following year. The tract has been condemned as being full of impostures and deceits. On the contrary, it is soberly and veraciously written; the disappointing results of the expedition are accurately recorded, but so strong is the author's belief in his preconceived idea, that, from the title onward, his narrative conveys the impression of great things on the verge of achievement and untold wealth ready at a touch to fall into England's lap. It is the work of a poet who bridles in his struggling Muse with pain. The will-o'-the-wisp of gold, which had led a thousand adventurers by devious paths about

## THE VOYAGERS

the world, led Raleigh to the scaffold, where he found relief from 'those inmost and soul-piercing wounds which are ever aching while uncured,' and expiated his pride and his dreams.

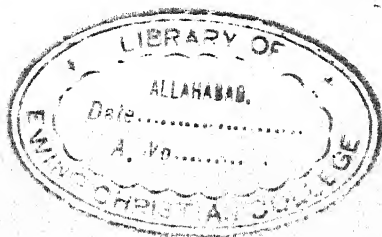
His death marks the end of the heroic age ; with him the poets and architects who had prophesied and planned pass away, and the accountants and builders begin their long and tedious task of erecting the fabric of the Empire.

The last  
great Ad-  
venturer.

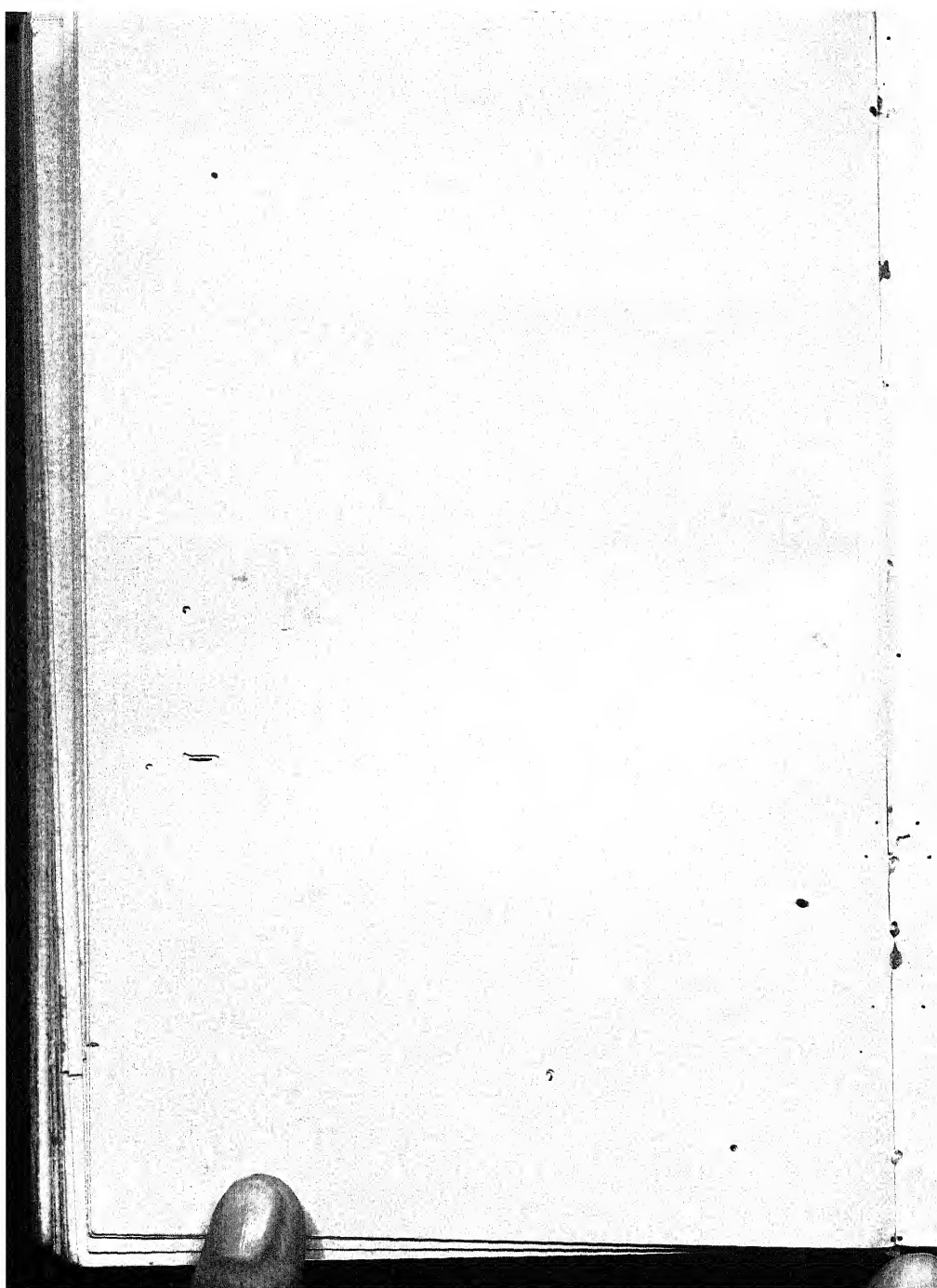
## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

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II  
RICHARD HAKLUYT







## II

RICHARD HAKLUYT, the recorder of all these matters, desired no memorial save his book. Richard Hakluyt.

His relics lie buried under the 'star-ypointing pyramid' which, by his own incessant labour, he erected to the honour of his country.

'Master of Arts,' he calls himself, 'and sometime Student of Christ Church in Oxford.'

Except to show that he is not unqualified for his task, and to express his gratitude to the learned foundations where he had his training, he does not speak of himself. He is a Scholar,

Bibliographer, and Editor, and so has a three-fold title to modesty and self-renunciation. On

the title-page of his first book, the *Divers Voyages* of 1582, his name does not appear; in the second and third volumes of the *Voyages* he pays his tribute to the Church of which he was a minister by describing himself as 'Richard

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Hakluyt, Preacher.' He was less of a preacher than was his disciple, Samuel Purchas, and his book is the gainer by it. No biography of him, in any full sense of that word, is possible. Except for a few bare facts and dates, all that we know of him is told us by himself, in his Prefaces and his few extant letters. No portrait of him has been recovered. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, but no inscription marks his grave, nor is it known in what part of the Church he lies.

His  
modesty.

There can be no doubt that this obscurity was of his own choosing; and belonged, as of right, to his character and temper. He had many famous and influential friends, and was constantly in traffic with them for the enrichment of his book. They answered his questions, gave him their help, were led to think on the topics he had broached, and thought nothing further of the questioner. He acknowledges his obligations to many 'virtuous gentlemen,' who, partly from their private affection to himself, but chiefly from their devotion to the furtherance of his work, had lent him their

His  
friends.

## RICHARD HAKLUYT

assistance. Sir John Hawkins and Sir Walter Raleigh helped him with the Western voyages. William Burrough, Clerk of her Majesty's Navy, and Anthony Jenkinson, the Russian traveller, gave him the benefit of their experience for the voyages to the North East. The Lord Treasurer, Burghley, let him have access to a cabinet, or museum, of curiosities brought home by travellers. Sir Robert Cecil, in 1597, consulted him concerning the country of Guiana, and whether it were fit to be planted by the English. Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Francis Walsingham, and Lord Howard of Effingham, the Lord High Admiral of England, accepted his dedications, approved his purposes, and held converse with him. Mercator, Ortelius, Thevet, and other foreign cosmographers and scholars were his friends and correspondents. Yet it is vain to look for traces of him among the works and memorials of the brilliant company that knew him in life. He is the silent man, seated in the dark corner, who is content to listen and remember, and whose questions, interpolated from time to time, divert attention

His  
character.

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from himself, and direct it to the moving tales that come in answer to them.

His own allusions to himself, though they are not infrequent, bear curious witness to his complete absorption in his theme. Where he mentions himself it is to give authenticity to the remarks and memories which he has collected in conversation. These stray references reveal him to us as indefatigable in research, at the Court, or on the highway, losing no opportunity of adding a single fact or observation to his store. We learn that at Paris he talked twice with Don Antonio, the Portuguese Pretender, who showed him a map of the North West passage; and with 'five or six of his best captains and pilots, one of whom was born in East India.' We find him 'in the Queen's privy gallery at Westminster,' or in the King's Library at Paris, or introduced by his friend, the Bishop of Chichester, to Lord Lumley's stately library, examining globes, consulting originals, copying manuscripts. Or he is in conversation with Mr. Jennings and Mr. Smith, 'the master and master's mate of the ship called

Personal  
Remini-  
scences.

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the *Toby*, belonging to Bristol,' who bring him tales from Spain concerning the natives of Florida; or with 'an English gentleman, Captain Muffett,' who has been a prisoner in Spain, and reports how the King of Spain fears nothing so much as the planting of an English colony in America; or with a nameless sailor, 'one of mine acquaintance of Ratcliffe,' who tells how the French fishers attacked the Spanish fishers at Newfoundland, and how he, the English sailor, in the name of fair play, defended the Spaniards. So we catch glimpses of Richard Hakluyt wandering and enquiring without rest or remission. He has friends among French sailors; one of them, Stephen Bellinger of Rouen, gives him a piece of supposed silver ore, and shows him beasts' skins, dressed and painted by the Indians; another shows him a piece of the tree called Sassafras, brought from Florida, and expounds its high medicinal virtue. Mr. Pryhouse, of Guernsey, meets him in London, and gives him news of the French scheme for colonising Canada; another friend, unnamed, brings him an account of the setting up of a

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Never-  
ending  
research.

saw-mill in Worcestershire, which suggests to him that saw-mills might be set up on the Virginian coast. Among all these, his friends and fellows, the Preacher moves like a shadow, giving his heart to search out concerning all things that are done under heaven, exercised with sore travail, and writing words of truth. The English nation may well be proud of him, and glad that, while its great destinies were still in the making, there lived a man quick enough to discern the significance of the deeds done around him, and steady enough, in purpose and perseverance, to encounter and overcome the difficulties of giving to them an enduring chronicle.

The  
- Life of  
Hakluyt.

He was born, probably in London, about the year 1553. His family belonged to Eyton, or Yatton, in Herefordshire, and from the time of Edward II onward, supplied not a few sheriffs and members of Parliament to the service of the country. The family was English, and the name, in its accepted form, owes its alien suggestion to the preservation of archaic spelling. It was pronounced, and sometimes spelt,

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Hacklewit. So Drayton, in his *Ode to the Virginian Voyage*:

Thy Voyages attend,  
Industrious Hackluit;  
Whose reading shall inflame  
Men to seek fame,  
And much commend  
To after times thy wit.

Richard Hakluyt was early left an orphan, and possibly was under the guardianship of the cousin to whom he owed his initiation and calling. He was educated at Westminster School, where he was a Queen's Scholar. Thence he passed to Christ Church, Oxford, in 1570, and proceeded in due course to the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1574, and of Master of Arts in 1577. But before ever he went to Oxford he had taken the ply that shaped his whole life. There is something of ritual and emphasis in the unusual detail with which he tells Sir Francis Walsingham of his chance visit, in his boyhood, to his cousin, also called Richard Hakluyt, of the Middle Temple. A map of the world lay on the table, and Master Richard Hakluyt took occasion to give his young cousin

Westminster and Christ Church.



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His  
ordina-  
tion.

a lesson in geography, showing how knowledge had been recently advanced; explaining also (what seems to have been his own special study) the application of geography to commerce, and enumerating the products and the wants of each country. Then, although no vows were uttered, there followed a kind of dedication of the Preacher to his life's work. 'From the map,' says Hakluyt, 'he brought me to the Bible, and turning to the 107th Psalm, directed me to the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses, where I read that *they which go down to the sea in ships, and occupy by the great waters, they see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep.* Which words of the Prophet, together with my cousin's discourse (things of high and rare delight to my young nature) took in me so deep an impression that I constantly resolved, if ever I were preferred to the University, where better time and more convenient place might be ministered for these studies, I would by God's assistance prosecute that knowledge and kind of literature, the doors whereof (after a sort) were so happily opened before me.'

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At Oxford, in the time he could save from His work  
prescribed studies, he set himself to read and at Oxford  
master all the Travels and Voyages extant in  
Greek, Latin, Italian, French, English, Spanish,  
or Portuguese. The first five of these languages  
he acquired; Spanish remained long unknown  
to him, if we may judge from his habit of  
quoting Spanish treatises in Italian, French  
or English translations. Having taken his  
Master's degree, he lectured, 'in the common  
schools,' on the subject nearest to his heart,  
and was the first, he says, to demonstrate the  
advance of geography by comparing the new  
'lately reformed maps, globes, and spheres' with  
the old inaccurate representations. He men-  
tions these lectures but slightly, and we do not  
know who were his audience. Thomas Lodge,  
the dramatist, whose father was interested in  
navigation, and who voyaged with Cavendish,  
may possibly have attended them. In 1582 the  
first-fruits of the Preacher's study appeared, with  
a dedication to Sir Philip Sidney. The title of  
this book (which has been reprinted by the  
Hakluyt Society) gives a clue to the patriotic

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His first  
book.

ambitions of its author. It is called *Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America and the Islands adjacent unto the same, made first of all by our Englishmen and afterwards by the Frenchmen and Britons*. It is in effect a pamphlet and collection of documents in support of England's prior claim to possess and settle the coast of America. In the dedication the main idea is expounded. 'The time approacheth,' says Hakluyt, 'and now is, that we of England may share and part stakes (if we will ourselves), both with the Spaniard and the Portingale, in part of America and other regions as yet undiscovered.' There is good hope, he says, that, besides possessing America, we may find out a short and easy passage, by the North West, to more distant lands. And for these purposes what is chiefly necessary is a good system of technical education in nautical affairs.

Nautical  
Education.

Throughout his life Hakluyt continued to urge on the government and public the importance of sound nautical education. His scheme, though nothing came of it, was a modest one. A lectureship should be established 'in London

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or about Ratcliffe, in some convenient place'; and he tells how Sir Francis Drake offered twenty pounds a year to this end; but forty pounds a year was found needful to secure a fit man, and, no other donor presenting himself, the scheme fell through. The Spaniards, says Hakluyt, maintain at the Contractation House, or Exchange, in Seville, a learned Reader in the art of Navigation: and no-one is given charge of ships for the Indies until he has attended the instructions of the Reader and has satisfied a board of examiners who are joined with the Reader to test theoretical and practical knowledge. This Readership, he points out, has already given to Spain the services of learned writers on the art of navigation, as for instance Geronimo de Chavez, and Pedro de Medina, whose works are text-books for the navigators of all nations.<sup>1</sup> What Hakluyt desires, in short, is, a Nautical University or Faculty, where men may be trained and graduated in all the

Spanish  
Professors.

<sup>1</sup>Pedro de Medina's *Arte de Navegar* (1545) was translated into English by John Frampton and published in London in 1581, a year before Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages*.

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sciences and crafts that are necessary to furnish forth the complete navigator, and to make him an efficient servant of his country. He returns to the subject in his later dedications, pressing it on the attention of the Lord High Admiral and of Sir Robert Cecil. His was a voice crying in the wilderness; and to this day the naval and military professions have no dealings with University education. The man who should bring these into touch, who should enlist soldiers and sailors for the furtherance of knowledge, and give to the Army and Navy and Merchant service officers wide awake to the scientific opportunities of their calling, would be a benefactor to his country and a worthy disciple of Hakluyt. One at least of Hakluyt's ideas has had a very recent fulfilment. In his dedication of the third Volume of his *Voyages* (1600) to Sir Robert Cecil he speaks of a short treatise, which he had lying by him, touching *The curing of hot diseases incident to travellers in long and Southern voyages*, by one George Watson. He intended to include it in his book, but desisted, because it was very defective, and a certain

Tropical  
Medicine.

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Doctor Gilbert promised that the whole College of Physicians should confer, and produce something authoritative on the diseases of hot and cold regions. So the founders of recent Schools of Tropical Medicine are also disciples of Hakluyt.

Before the publication of his first book, Hakluyt must have moved from Oxford to London, in what capacity we do not know. Early in 1582 we find him in correspondence with Sir Francis Walsingham, who treats him as a recognised authority on Western discovery. It is a strange thing that he, the recorder of the voyages, should have taken part in none of them. We hear of two Expeditions which he thought of accompanying. One was Drake's West Indies voyage of 1585. The other was the fatal voyage of Sir Humphrey Gilbert in 1583. What detained him, or changed his purpose does not appear; in the year of Gilbert's voyage he was appointed chaplain to Sir Edward Stafford, Queen Elizabeth's ambassador in Paris, and remained for five years in France. Stafford was brother-in-law to Howard of Effingham, so that

Hakluyt  
in Paris.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

His chief  
original  
work.

it seems likely that in this case, as in others, Hakluyt's preferment came to him from his interest in nautical affairs. He was on terms of intimacy with the Gilberts and Raleigh; his *Discourse of Western Planting*, presented to the Queen in the autumn of 1584, was written at the request of Raleigh, and was inspired by the reports of Captains Amadas and Barlow. It is the longest and most valuable of his extant original writings, though his unvarying modesty prevented its inclusion in his *Voyages*. In Paris he devoted himself with energy to the preparation of the book which was now the goal of all his efforts—a collection of the voyages undertaken by Englishmen. The first edition of *The Principal Navigations*, in one folio volume, appeared in 1589. Then followed ten more years of labour, and the second and final edition, in three folio volumes, was given to the world in 1598 and the two following years.

His great  
Book.

Church  
prefer-  
ment.

In the meantime, ecclesiastical preferment had come to him. In 1586, while he was in France, he became prebendary of Bristol, and in 1590 rector of Wetheringsett in Suffolk. The date



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of his marriage is uncertain ; in his dedication, to Sir Robert Cecil, of his Third Volume (1600), he speaks of his profession of divinity and the care of his family as having diverted him, for some years past, from the main endeavour of his life. In 1602 he was made prebendary, and in 1603 archdeacon, of Westminster. He was also chaplain of the Savoy ; and in 1612 obtained the rectory of Gedney in Lincolnshire. He died, seven months after Shakespeare, on His death. the 23rd of November 1616. He left a fair estate to an unthrifty son, who is said to have squandered it. His unpublished papers fell into the hands of Samuel Purchas, who scattered them about the four volumes of his *Pilgrims*, 'after his irregular and curtailed or contracted manner,' interspersed with remarks 'often silly, and always little to the purpose.' But the inestimable value of his materials has given Purchas a secure place beside his greater predecessor.

Besides the *Voyages*, Hakluyt was responsible Lesser works. for the publication of several other works. He translated and published, in 1587, Laudonnière's account of Florida ; in the same year he set



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forth an edition of the *Decades* of Peter Martyr. In 1601 he published *The Discoveries of the World*, a translation of a treatise by Antonio Galvano, the Portuguese governor of Ternate. His last work, *Virginia richly valued by the description of the maine land of Florida her next neighbour*, appeared in 1609; it is translated from a Portuguese account of Soto's expedition to Florida. Moreover Hakluyt took pains for the continuance of the work he had begun, and endeavoured to gather round him a school of younger men. English translations of accepted standard works on Africa, China, and Nova Francia were undertaken and completed at his suggestion and by his encouragement.

The apo-  
theosis of  
industry.

The quality of Hakluyt which most impressed his contemporaries was his enormous industry. He often speaks of this himself, and confesses that only an ardent love of his country and care for her good name could have induced him to undergo labours so tedious and exhausting. 'I call the work a burden,' he says, 'in consideration that these voyages lay so dispersed, scattered,

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and hidden in several huckster's hands, that I now wonder at myself to see how I was able to endure the delays, curiosity, and backwardness of many from whom I was to receive my originals.' And again: 'What restless nights, what painful days, what heat, what cold I have endured; how many long and chargeable journeys I have travelled; how many famous libraries I have searched into; what variety of ancient and modern writers I have perused; what a number of old records, patents, privileges, letters, etc., I have redeemed from obscurity and perishing; into how manifold acquaintance I have entered; what expenses I have not spared; and yet what fair opportunities of private gain, preferment and ease I have neglected; albeit thyself canst hardly imagine, yet I by daily experience do find and feel, and some of my entire friends can sufficiently testify.' In process of time, no doubt, his work grew easier, as his purpose became known to a wider circle, and travellers of their own accord brought him material. The raids on the West Indies yielded him,

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Chance  
finds.

as he confesses, some good literary profit. In 1592, off the Azores, Robert Crosse captured the huge *Madre de Dios*; a Latin treatise on China, written in the year 1590, was found among the spoils, and given to Hakluyt. It was 'enclosed in a case of sweet cedar-wood, and lapped up almost an hundred fold in fine calicut-cloth, as though it had been some incomparable jewel.' But for all his treasure-troves, his labours must have been unending. His life is a notable example of how singleness of purpose and dogged persistence, in a man not - endowed, so far as we can tell, with any of the more brilliant attributes of genius, lead him, as if inevitably, to high achievement and lasting fame.

The  
moral of  
Hakluyt's  
life.

The  
Expan-  
sion of  
England.

His main purpose he has himself declared. He belongs to that stalwart race of clerics who, next to the Kingdom of Heaven, love a fight; but fighting is the accident of his book, not the essential. The discovery of the world and the expansion of England are what make his heart beat faster; he is a zealot of the map and of the flag. He knows that he lives in an age of great

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attempts ; the reproach of sluggishness and lack of enterprise, which was fastened on England during the earlier years of discovery, is now clean wiped away, and the English are at home on every sea. 'In this most famous and peerless government of her most excellent Majesty, her subjects, through the special assistance and blessing of God, in searching the most opposite corners and quarters of the world, and, to speak plainly, in compassing the vast globe of the earth more than once, have excelled all the nations and people of the earth.' They started without those advantages of science and ancient learning which befriended the Portuguese ; the parts of the world that were left for them to discover were more difficult and dangerous than 'the mild, lightsome, temperate, and warm Atlantic Ocean, over which the Spaniards and Portugals have made so many pleasant, prosperous and golden voyages.' Yet they redeemed their delay, and are become the teachers and pilots of others. The Dutch, says Hakluyt, deserve commendation for their Northern voyages, 'yet with this proviso ; that our

Pupils of  
England.

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English nation led them the dance, brake the ice before them, and gave them good leave to light their candle at our torch.' Again and again his pride in his country, and admiration for her valorous seamen, make themselves apparent in the warmth and eloquence of his speech.

The  
founding of  
Colonies.

But the gain of these last happy years can be made good, he holds, in one way only, by claiming and settling the lands of the New World. It does not fall to Hakluyt to record any successful English attempt at colonisation. None the less, it is this that is the very sea-mark of his utmost sail. The history of his active life begins with the colonising schemes of Gilbert, Sidney and Raleigh; it ends with the colonisation of Virginia achieved at last, and the offer to himself of the living of James Town, which he prudently supplied by a curate. From first to last he preached the benefits of colonising for the furtherance of trade and the honest employment of the people. Statesmen and economists, from Sir Thomas More onwards, had complained of the multitude of loiterers and idle vagabonds in England, thrown

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out of work by the enclosure of land. Hakluyt adds his testimony, and offers a remedy. 'Our prisons are pestered and filled,' he says, 'with able men to serve their Country, which for small robberies are daily hanged up in great numbers, even twenty at a clap, out of one gaol (as was seen at the last Assizes at Rochester).'

We should lead these people forth into the temperate and fertile parts of America, 'which, being within six weeks sailing of England, are yet unpossessed of any Christians, and seem to offer themselves unto us, stretching nearer unto her Majesty's dominions than to any other part of Europe.' And, with a touch of learned rhetoric very unusual in his writing, he invokes the example of the Romans and Carthaginians, and of those 'small, weak, and unreasonable creatures,' the bees, who are led out by their captains to seek themselves a new dwelling-place. He lent a hand in all schemes that might lead to colonisation, and was one of the Company of Merchants to whom Raleigh assigned his Virginian patent in 1588. After the premature death of Sir Humphrey Gilbert

Hakluyt  
and  
Virginia.

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the man who more than any other took upon himself the toil, and earned the credit, of establishing England's first colony, was Richard Hakluyt.

His  
practical  
wisdom.

There is no touch of the fanatic about him, for all his zeal. His reflections and advice on every subject that he handles are shrewd, cool and practical. He desires, for instance, the evangelisation of the Indies, but he will be no party to hasty methods. 'The means,' he says, 'to send such as shall labour effectually in this business is, by planting one or two colonies of our nation upon that firm,' (*i.e.* mainland) 'where they may remain in safety and first learn the language of the people near adjoining (the gift of tongues being now taken away), and by little and little acquaint themselves with their manner, and so with discretion and mildness distill into their purged minds the sweet and lively liquor of the gospel.' He keeps an open eye for all the material advantages that may attend the possession of a distant colony. Chief of these is 'the advancing of navigation, the very walls of this our Island.' Complaints

His zeal  
for navigation.



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have long been rife, he says, of the decay of our navy; and the means taken to encourage our people to a sea-faring life have met with very partial success. Queen Elizabeth, in 1563, had ordained that Wednesday should be 'a new fish day,' the eating of meat being restrained to the end that fishermen and mariners should find a market for their takings. Yet little benefit to shipping had followed from indirect measures like this. 'At this day,' says Hakluyt, writing in 1584, 'I am assured that there are scarce two ships of two hundred tons belonging to the whole city of Bristol, and very few or none of the like burden along the channel of the Severn, from Gloucester to the Lands End on the one side, and Milford Haven on the other. Now, to remedy this great and unknown want, no enterprise possibly can be devised more fit to increase our great shipping than this Western fortifying and planting. . . . Moreover, in the judgment of those that are expert in sea causes, it will breed more skilful, cunning and stout pilots and mariners than other belonging to this land. For it is the long voyages (so



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Benefits  
of long •  
voyages.

they be not too excessive long, nor through intemperate climates, as those of the Portugales into their West Indies) that harden seamen, and open unto them the secrets of navigation.' Hakluyt, in short, perceived that the supremacy of the sea could hardly be achieved by a nation whose ships were mainly occupied in the coasting trade. He is no less concerned for the welfare of trade. From his cousin of the Middle Temple he had early learned the value of

Commercial  
Geography.

what is now called commercial geography. In his *Voyages* are printed many papers of minute and careful instruction for factors and merchants visiting foreign countries. The most remarkable of these, *Remembrances for a Factor at Constantinople*, is written by Richard Hakluyt the elder, and contains a reasoned defence of the practical study of beasts and fowls, herbs and trees, their properties and uses. 'If this care had not been heretofore in our ancestors, then had our life been savage now; for then we had not had wheat nor rye, pease nor beans, barley nor oats, pear nor apple, vine, nor many other profitable and pleasant plants; bull nor

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cow, sheep nor swine, horse nor mare, cock nor hen, nor a number of other things that we enjoy, without which our life were to be said barbarous; for these things, and a thousand that we use more, the first inhabitants of this Island found not here.' By way of example the latest importations of strange commodities are cited, including some of those commemorated in the popular rhyme.

Turkeys, Carps, Hops, Pickerels, and Beer,  
Came into England all in one year.

The *Voyages* record many great deeds; but their editor scorns nothing as trivial, if it is likely to be of service for the material prosperity of England.

This strong practical bent and concrete habit of mind served the Preacher well in the designing and ordering of his book. He is not misled by any encyclopaedic ambitions, or by the lust of universality. It is a credit to him, greater than can be readily conceived by our scientific and empiric age, that he sets himself to record individual observations and particular experiences. He had been educated after the fashion

The  
Method of  
Hakluyt's  
Book.

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of the time, in the vague generalities of the scholastic learning ; and he would have none of them. It is the story of the travels of this man and that man, he says, which brings us to a certain and full knowledge of the world ; 'not those weary volumes bearing the titles of Universal Cosmography, which some men that I could name have published as their own.' He is careful to ascertain and record the name of the historian of each voyage, as well as the name of the voyager, so that every man may 'answer for himself, justify his reports, and stand accountable for his own doings.' The classification and arrangement of the voyages follow a like practical method. First, as being the oldest, come the voyages to the South and South East ; then the North Eastern voyages, the earliest of which were made under our Saxon Kings ; and lastly, not without a purposed climax, the voyages to the West and 'the beginnings and proceeding of the two English Colonies planted in Virginia.' The voyages to the South West ('whereof I think the Spaniard hath had some knowledge') were in fact by far

Arrange-  
ment.

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the most numerous, but they are given a small relative importance in Hakluyt's scheme. The West Indies have a place in his epic not unlike the place of Carthage in Virgil's poem ; they are visited by the founders of the British Empire on the way to a greater destiny.

To estimate Hakluyt's labours as an editor, it would be necessary to collate his *Voyages* in detail with the printed and manuscript originals, where these are recoverable. A good beginning has been made by the Hakluyt Society ; and the complete task, however troublesome, will be no more than a just tribute to those great charges and infinite cares, watchings, toils, travels, and wearying out of his weak body, from which the Preacher long ago found rest. A comparison of some of his *Voyages* with the full originals, printed by the Hakluyt Society, reveals him as a conscientious Editor, wholly free from the vanity of self-assertion. He follows his authorities word for word and takes few liberties with them. He omits nothing that tends to knowledge, though he has a ready pen to excise what tends merely to edification. It was the habit

Hakluyt  
as Editor.

His  
omissions.

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of his age to begin even a nautical diary with a few remarks on the origin of the world, the history of man, and the opinions of Plato. To these excrescences the Preacher gives short shrift. If he was as severe a critic of himself as of other men, his sermons must have been models of terse and pointed exhortation. Master George Best's *Discourse* of the three voyages of Frobisher begins, in the original, with a dissertation on the sundry employments and delights of men. 'Man is born'—so the overture runs—'not only to serve his own turn (as Tully saith); but his kinsfolk, friends, and the commonwealth especially, look for some furtherance at his hands, and some fruits of his labour: whereupon sundry men finding themselves as it were tied by this bond and duty of human society, have willingly endeavoured sundry ways to show themselves profitable members of their commonweal.' All this, and much more, Hakluyt omits, to get on with the practical business of the voyage:—'First, it may be gathered by experience of our Englishmen in Anno 1553,' and so forth. No doubt, by

Utility  
his aim.

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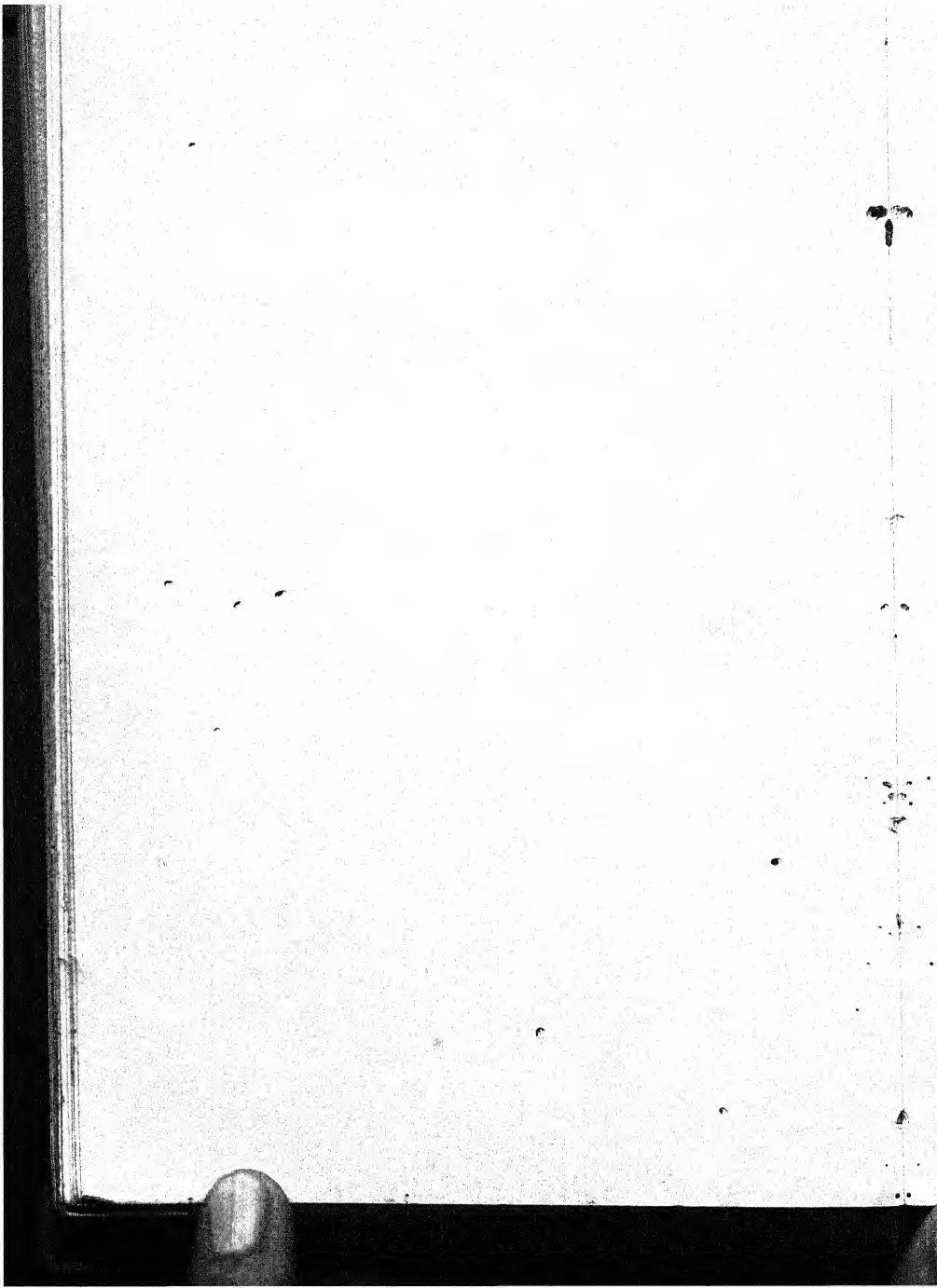
thus stripping off the graces and ornaments of some of his pilgrims, he has diminished the attraction of his book for a student of our older literature; but, on the other hand, he has condensed within the covers of his three folio volumes a far larger amount of valuable practical information than could have been brought within the same compass by a reverent modern editor. It was utility that he valued; more than the thanks of lovers of elegant prose he would have esteemed the profits of the East India Company, which occupied some part of his later thoughts, and which, according to Sir Thomas Smith, were, on one occasion, increased by twenty thousand pounds through a careful study of the 'Books of Voyages.'



III

THE INFLUENCE OF THE  
VOYAGES ON POETRY  
AND IMAGINATION





### III

HERE, then, in this Book of Voyages, set down in matter-of-fact fashion, one after another, with no striving after beauty of form, and no care for dramatic effect, are the records of the deeds that made England great. Over against the plays of Shakespeare and his fellows, as their natural counterpart, must be set the *Voyages* of Hakluyt; he who would understand the Elizabethan age, and what it meant for England, must know them both. 'The word,' says Chaucer, 'should be cousin to the deed.' In a wider sense than he intended, the word always is cousin to the deed; and the lives that men live express themselves inevitably in the books that they write. That marvellous summer time of the imagination, the Elizabethan age, with all its wealth of flowers and fruit, was the gift to England of the sun that bronzed the faces of the voyagers and

The  
Voyages  
and the  
Age of  
Elizabeth.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

of the winds that carried them to the four quarters of the world. Historians of literature have been wont to treat the imaginative growth of the Elizabethan age as if it were a problem of skilful gardening, an instance of high success in the mysteries of transplanting, grafting, forcing, and the like. But what nourished the pale slips brought from abroad? They struck their roots deep in a soil rich with the matter of life, and breathed a genial and stimulating air. The dramatists and poets were the children and inheritors of the Voyagers.

The new  
outlook on  
the world.

Man's imagination is limited by the horizon of his experience. When he attempts by guesswork to outgo the bounds assigned, his frailty and ignorance stand apparent; he is like a child explaining the world by its doll's house. The irremovable boundaries of knowledge are the same for every age; human sense is feeble, human reason whimsical and vain, human life short and troubled. But every now and then, in the long history of the race, there is a rift in the cloud, or a new prospect gained by climbing. These are the great ages of the world.

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

Creation widens on the view, and the air is alive with a sense of promise and expectancy. So it was in the age of Elizabeth. The recovery of the classics opened a long and fair vista backwards; the exploration of the New World seemed to lift the curtain on a glorious future. And the English, the little parochial people, who for centuries had tilled their fields and tended their cattle in their island home, cut off from the great movements of European policy, suddenly found themselves, by virtue of their shipping, competitors for the dominion of the earth. It is no wonder that their hearts distended with pride, and, hardening in their strength, gloried. A new sense of exaltation possessed the country, the exaltation of knowledge and power. The rising tide of national enthusiasm flooded the literature of the people, and surprised the dwellers on many a high and dry inland creek.

Charles Lamb, who loved all that is familiar and ancient and homely, somewhere expresses regret that the plays of Shakespeare and some of his brother dramatists hardly ever choose as

Exotic  
ideals.

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their theme the simple daily life of the England of their own time, the affairs of the shopkeepers of Cheapside or of the countrymen of Essex. Had the dramatists been of his mind, we should have had no great English drama, and no Shakespeare. The regret felt by Lamb is only natural; he was a true antiquary, and the touch of antiquity has gilded the bucolics and citizens of Shakespeare's time. Vulgarly and stupidity are amiable enough in dead men. But the question at issue was a live question in the time of Elizabeth. The men of the new school turned impatiently away from the self-satisfied insularity and rustic ineptitude of their forebears, and hastened to become citizens of the world. The infection of foreign literatures and foreign travel changed customs and manners so fast that many sober observers stood aghast at the rapidity of the movement, and the country rang with denunciations of the innovators. In a single generation the change was complete. At the time of Hawkins' earlier voyages *Gammer Gurton's Needle* was a comedy of the newest fashion, and the highest reach of

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

English tragedy was still to be sought in the miracle-plays; before he died *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Doctor Faustus* had been seen on the boards of the London theatres. Action and imagination went hand in hand. If the voyagers explored new countries and trafficked with strange peoples, the poets and dramatists went abroad too, and rifled foreign nations, returning with far-fetched and dear-bought wares; or explored lonely and untried recesses of the microcosm of man. One spirit of discovery and exultant power animated both seamen and poets. Shakespeare and Marlowe were, no less than Drake and Cavendish, circumnavigators of the world.

The  
voyagers  
in strange  
seas of  
thought.

The influences of the voyages upon the great literature of the time has been little recognised, because the reflection of contemporary events in thought and imagination is always indirect, difficult to outline, and utterly unlike common expectation. When exact historians complain of a poet that he does not hold up the mirror to his own time, they are often merely complaining that he is not a reporter, a retailer of

The  
methods of  
Poetry.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Shake-  
speare  
and the  
England  
of his time.

names and dates, the dupe of notoriety. Shakespeare, it is often said, tells us more of Italy than of England; yet in Shakespeare's plays only the labels are Italian, while every type of English character, from a king to a tinker, is drawn to the life. Othello is a Tudor gentleman. Petruchio, Bassanio, and a dozen others are adventurous Elizabethan gallants. Osric is a courtly gull, Mercutio a courtly wit, Edgar in *Lear* is a noble masquerading as an Abram man, Autolycus is a cony-catcher. All alike are heightened portraits of the men whom Shakespeare had met and talked to at the Court, in the tavern, or by the roadside. It is true that the names of the great men of his own time seldom occur in his plays. A great living man is celebrated chiefly by poetasters; nor, indeed, were these lacking to celebrate Drake and Frobisher and Howard. A poet commonly prefers to work with human material closer at hand, easier to come at, not hedged around by popular favour or on its guard against intimate research. He will select at his own liking from the life around him, build up his own greatness,

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and borrow a name from ancient history or fable. But whatever is most characteristic and vital in the life and thought of an age will find utterance in its poetry, none the less. The impressions recorded will perhaps have no very obvious connection with the particular facts of history; they will be those rather that strike the eye and fire the imagination of a child. The romance of sea-faring will express itself not in an account of any one notable exploit, with due credit allotted by name to all who took part in it, but in some such vague memory and sentiment as that of the American poet:

I remember the black wharves, and the slips,  
And the sea-tides tossing free,  
And the Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
And the magic of the sea.

Poetry speaks only that which it knows, and testifies only that which it has seen. What did the Elizabethan poets know and see of the world of promise revealed by the navigators?

Some direct and commendatory notice there was of the most famous voyagers by name, and many poems, some of them by good poets, were



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Warner  
on the  
Voyagers.

addressed to the adventurers on setting forth. The later books of *Albion's England* (1602), for instance, by William Warner, are much concerned with the achievements recorded by Hakluyt, and tribute is paid in passing to Hakluyt himself. But Warner belongs to that older school of Protestant poets who had their education chiefly from the practice of metrical psalmody. His zeal is great, and he gives high praise to many of the travellers, with a full account, especially, of the North Eastern voyages and the deeds of Willoughby, Chancellor, Burrough, Jenkinson, Pet, and Jackman. But his style is less inspiring than his subject. Except as an accompaniment to stocking-weaving, there are no good uses to be found for verse of this kind:

It is no common labour to  
The river Ob to sail,  
Howbeit Burrough did therein,  
Not dangerless, prevail.

He through the foresaid frozen seas  
In Lapland did arrive,  
And thence, to expedite for Ob,  
His labours did revive.

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The author gives advice which his readers will gladly follow when, after touching briefly on the voyages of Drake, Hawkins, Gilbert, Frobisher, and the rest, he commends his audience to the Preacher :

Praise of  
Hakluyt.

Omitted then, and named men  
And lands (not here, indeed,  
So written of as they deserve)  
At large in Hakluyt read.

Perhaps the best of the poems dedicated to single expeditions is George Chapman's *De Guiana carmen Epicum* (1596). It is crabbed, like almost all Chapman's verse, but it embodies the very spirit that sent hundreds of young Englishmen over sea. The dream of gold is dreamed again in the description of Raleigh's purposed colony :

Chap-  
man's 'De  
Guiana'

Guiana, whose rich feet are mines of gold,  
Whose forehead knocks against the roof of stars,  
Stands on her tip-toes at fair England looking,  
Kissing her hand, bowing her mighty breast,  
And every sign of all submission making  
To be her sister, and the daughter both  
Of our most sacred maid.

The theme of the poem, however, is not gold, nor the expected miracle of Virtue rich ;

The faith  
of the  
Voyagers.

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it is Patriotism, Honour, and the Faith that will risk all for these :

But you patrician spirits that refine  
Your flesh to fire, and issue like a flame  
On brave endeavours, knowing that in them  
The tract of heaven in morn-like glory opens ;  
That know you cannot be the kings of earth,  
Claiming the rights of your creation,  
And let the mines of earth be kings of you ;  
That are so far from doubting likely drifts,  
That in things hardest y'are most confident :  
You that know death lives where power lives unused,  
Joying to shine in waves that bury you,  
And so make way for life even through your graves,  
That will not be content with horse to hold  
A thread-bare beaten way to home affairs ; . . .  
You that herein renounce the course of earth,  
And lift your eyes for guidance to the stars,  
That live not for yourselves, but to possess  
Your honour'd country of a general store ; . . .  
You that are blest with sense of all things noble,  
In this attempt your complete worths redouble.

The new  
golden  
world.

The poem closes with a picture of the blissful community that is to live on the banks of the Orinoco, and of the new golden world, where peace and plenty reign ; where learning is cherished and valour needs no weapons ; where the old debate between rich and poor is closed for ever :

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Where healthful recreations strow their meads,  
And make their mansions dance with neighbourhood,  
That here were drown'd in churlish avarice.

Visions like these became familiar to the  
imagination of poets when every year was  
enlarging hope and extending knowledge:

Discovering daily more and more about,  
In that immense and boundless ocean  
Of Nature's riches, never yet found out,  
Nor fore-clos'd with the wit of any man.

The new-born faith of the English in their  
national speech took heart of grace from the  
discoveries of the voyagers. Samuel Daniel,  
whose poem *Musophilus* (1601) is a long  
passionate hymn in praise of the new ideals,  
has expressed in a single couplet the two-fold  
aspiration of the age:

The  
Eliza-  
bethan  
ideal.

What good is like to this,  
To do worthy the writing, and to write  
Worthy the reading, and the world's delight?

The re-discovered glories of the ancients had  
for a time cast a damp upon national ambition.  
It seemed a paltry vanity in a writer of English  
to hope to win literary immortality for a speech  
shut up within the limits of a single island, and

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The  
English  
tongue.

cut off from close commerce with the countries which inherited the traditions of Greece and Rome. By way of answer to this doubt Daniel points prophetically to the New World. The Ancients civilised their world; another world has been given to the Moderns to civilise; the native gifts of Southern eloquence and poetry may hereafter be 'bettered by the patience of the North,' and may achieve a yet greater fame:

And who, in time, knows whither we may vent  
The treasure of our tongue? To what strange shores  
This gain of our best glory shall be sent  
To enrich unknowing nations with our stores?  
What worlds in th' yet unformèd Occident  
May come refin'd with the accents that are ours?

Or who can tell for what great work in hand  
The greatness of our style is now ordained?  
What powers it shall bring in, what spirits command?  
What thoughts let out, what humours keep restrained?  
What mischief it may powerfully withstand,  
And what fair ends may thereby be attained?

The  
poets as  
Empire-  
builders.

Before the first acre of land beyond the seas had been effectively added to the dominion of England, the poets had foretold the British Empire. The expansion of England was, in the main, the work of the Eighteenth Century;

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but the soldiers and statesmen who planted the Empire in India and Canada and the American Colonies, were the successors and pupils of Hakluyt's heroes; it was theirs to build the fabric that had been designed and to fulfil the prophecies that had been uttered in the great age of imagination.

The chief influence of the Voyages on the English imagination is not to be looked for in special tributes or even in exalted prophecies like these. The new ferment wrought in a deep and hidden fashion on the temper and habits of the mind. All preconceived notions and beliefs concerning cosmography, history, politics, and society were made ridiculous by the new discoveries. The world had been opened up by the fanatical self-confidence of visionaries, and had proved to be wilder than their wildest fancies. New kingdoms were to be had for the taking. Powers and virtues unknown to the peoples of the Old World had perhaps been preserved through the ages in remote and fortunate islands. All things became possible; credulity was wiser than experience; and the

Influence  
of the  
Voyages  
on  
thought.

The  
widened  
horizon.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

wonders reported were reckoned merely the first-fruits of greater things to come. The society of the Old World meanwhile was rent in twain by the schism in the Christian Church. Great monarchies were tottering to their fall. The signs and portents of the times pointed to the beginning of a new age, when the riches and power of the world should be the prize of bold adventurers, and courage the only passport to success.

Spenser's  
argument.

The argument from the voyages is set forth explicitly by Spenser in a well-known passage of the *Faerie Queene*. His fairy world, he says, has been condemned by some as the forgery of an idle brain.

But let that man with better sense advize,  
That of the world least part to us is red;  
And daily how through hardy enterprise  
Many great Regions are discovered,  
Which to late age were never mentioned  
Who ever heard of th' Indian Peru?  
Or who in venturous vessel measured  
The Amazon huge river, now found trew?  
Or fruitfullest Virginia who did ever vew?

Yet all these were, when no man did them know,  
Yet have from wisest ages hidden been;

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

And later times thinges more unknowne shall show.  
• Why then should witless man so much misweene  
That nothing is but that which he hath seene?  
What if within the Moones fayre shining sphere,  
What if in every other starre unseene  
Of other worldes he happily should heare,  
He wonder would much more; yet such to some appeare.

It is not without significance that Hakluyt himself makes use of exactly the same argument. Hakluyt's argument.

‘If any man shall object,’ he says, speaking of the Friars, ‘that they have certain incredible relations, I answer, first, that many true things may to the ignorant seem incredible.’ And again, in praise of his own age:—‘Which of the kings of this land before her Majesty had their banners ever seen in the Caspian sea? Which of them hath ever dealt with the Emperor of Persia, as her Majesty hath done, and attained for her merchants large and loving privileges? Who ever saw, before this regiment, an English Ligier in the stately porch of the Grand Signor at Constantinople? Who ever found English consuls and agents at Tripolis in Syria, at Aleppo, at Babylon, at Balsara, and, which is more, who ever heard



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of Englishmen at Goa before now? What English ships did heretofore ever anchor in 'the mighty River of Plate?'—and so on, passing in review the unprecedented achievements of the apostles of navigation. Both Spenser and Hakluyt are right in making much of these things. The boast of the Stoic is empty, that the mind is its own place. The mind lives by its takings, and a fresh experience feathers the wings of the human spirit, and lends them scope and power.

The spirit  
of ad-  
venture :  
Tom  
Stukeley.

The fantastic adventure of the age and its intimate connection with grave historical events may be well seen in the career of the notorious Tom Stukeley. He was a man of small account, says Camden, 'a ruffian, a riotous spend-thrift, and a notable vapourer,' who had been disappointed in his hope of obtaining a small official post in Ireland. He offered his services to the Pope, promising to drive the English troops out of Ireland, and to fire the English fleet. To this end he was put in command of some eight hundred Italian soldiers levied at the charges of Spain. He set sail from Civita Vecchia and arrived at Lisbon,

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

where he was to be joined by Sebastian, King of Portugal. Sebastian induced him, by way of preface to the Irish campaign, to lend his force against the Mahomedan powers of Northern Africa; and in 1578, at the battle of Alcazar, where Sebastian and two Moorish kings fell, Stukeley also was slain. By the death of the King of Portugal without a son the way was opened for the Spanish claim, and the attention of King Philip was for years diverted from his intended invasion of England. Stukeley's romantic career was subsequently dramatised for the London public in Peele's *Battle of Alcazar*.

A career like this serves to show how the life of the age acted on its literature. The differences between the Romantic drama of England and the Classic drama of France can never be understood while the question is treated only as a conflict between two literary schools. It is true that France, by position, history, and training was from the first more under the influence of classic literature and ancient theory than ever England had been. But in England, too, when

The New  
World and  
Romantic  
literature.

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the drama began its course, the partisans of the classical doctrine were first in the field, and made the bravest start. Then the new interests arose, and overwhelmed them. The echoes of ancient wisdom and shadows of ancient beauty which held the attention of France were drowned and scattered in England by loud voices and fierce lights. Extravagant deeds filled the popular imagination, and could not, by any legerdemain of pedantry, be brought within the prescribed critical compass. If the dramatists refused allegiance to the rules, they were merely following the lead of the adventurers. The fatalism of Greek Tragedy, where the end is known before the beginning, could give no real pleasure to a people intoxicated with the delights of surprise, and intolerant of all limitation. In a world where anything may happen, the fairy-story or the romance of adventure is the safest literary model.

Marlowe  
and the  
Voyagers.

The best exemplar of the new style is Marlowe, whose *Tamburlaine* set the fashion followed by Greene and Peele and many others. Without the Voyagers Marlowe is inconceivable.

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His imagination is wholly pre-occupied with the marvels of the world and his heart possessed by the new-found lust of power. The tasks that Doctor Faustus assigns to his serviceable spirits might have been studied from the reports of travellers:

I'll have them fly to India for gold,  
Ransack the Ocean for orient pearl,  
And search all corners of the new-found world  
For pleasant fruits and princely delicates; . . .  
I'll levy soldiers with the coin they bring,  
And chase the Prince of Parma from our land  
And reign sole King of all our Provinces.

Gold again is the theme of the *Jew of Malta*, and conquest and kingship the inspiration of *Tamburlaine*. The Scythian conqueror, like Shakespeare's Italian gentlemen, is at heart an Englishman. When he tries to tempt the Persian general into his service, his persuasions savour of the nautical pride of the English:

Both we will walk upon the lofty cliffs  
And Christian merchants that with Russian stems  
Plough up hugh furrows in the Caspian Sea  
Shall vail to us, as lords of all the lake.

In 1567 Hawkins fired on a friendly Spanish Historical  
squadron in Plymouth Sound, to compel the parallels.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Admiral to lower his flag, and in 1570 Lord Charles Howard of Effingham exacted a like tribute in the open Channel from a Spanish fleet of a hundred and thirty sail which was conveying King Philip's bride-elect from Holland to Spain. Even the name of the Caspian was reminiscent of English adventure. 'Our nation,' says Hakluyt, writing in 1598, 'have adventured their persons, ships and goods, homewards and outwards, fourteen times over the unknown and dangerous Caspian Sea.' It is the dominion of the sea, as well as of the land, that Marlowe's Tamburlaine covets, and his eloquence reaches its highest when the sea is his theme. The defeat of Bajazeth, Emperor of the Turks, is a means to an end; the Persian fleet, already in Tamburlaine's control, shall circumnavigate the earth, and join forces with the Turkish Mediterranean squadron of men-of-war and buccaneers. Marlowe was an early friend of Raleigh's, and it is difficult not to read a political meaning into these sounding lines, written just after Drake's expedition of 1585, at a time when Don Antonio, the Portuguese

The dominion of the sea.

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

pretender, had taken refuge at the English Court, and was being used by Raleigh as a counter in the great political game :

So from the East unto the furthest West  
Shall Tamburlaine extend his puissant arm.  
The galleys and those pilling brigandines  
That yearly sail to the Venetian Gulf  
And hover in the Straits for Christians' wrecks,  
Shall lie at anchor in the isle Asant,  
Until the Persian fleet and men-of-war,  
Sailing along the oriental sea,  
Have fetched about the Indian Continent,  
Even from Persepolis to Mexico,  
And thence unto the Straits of Jubalter ;  
Where they shall meet and join their force in one  
Keeping in awe the Bay of Portingale,  
And all the ocean by the British shore ;  
And by this means I'll win the world at last.

Tamburlaine's  
naval  
policy.

As a naval plan of campaign this belongs to the school of Raleigh, who complained that the Queen did things by halves. The immense popular success of *Tamburlaine*, which changed the fortunes of the English drama, was due not solely to the resonance and splendour of the verse or the magic of the strange names. The audience listened to it in a temper quite unlike the temper that Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* begets

Topical  
success of  
'Tamburlaine.'

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in the modern reader. This drama of the world at stake was to them a representation of real affairs, and the high speeches of Tamburlaine voiced for them the defiance and the pride of England.

The  
romance  
of dis-  
covery.

How entirely Marlowe's imagination had been captured by the discoveries and exploits of the navigators is clearly shown in Tamburlaine's dying speech, which expresses all the romance of geography and all the ambition of empire. The Conqueror feels his vital powers failing, and, with his sons by his side, calls for a map of the world:

Give me a map; then let me see how much  
Is left for me to conquer all the world,  
That these, my boys, may finish all my wants.

The map is brought, and he traces on it his victorious progress through Asia and Africa, 'backwards and forwards near five thousand leagues.' The Suez Canal is one of his unfilled schemes:

Here, not far from Alexandria,  
Whereas the Terrene and the Red Sea meet,  
Being distant less than full a hundred leagues,  
I meant to cut a channel to them both  
That men might quickly sail to India.

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Then, for a legacy to his sons, he points to that part of the world, better than all the rest, which remains to conquer : The dream of Empire.

Look here, my boys ; see what a world of ground  
Lies westward from the midst of Cancer's line,  
Unto the rising of this earthly globe ;  
Whereas the sun, declining from our sight,  
Begins the day with our Antipodes !  
And shall I die, and this unconquered ?  
Lo, here, my sons, are all the golden mines,  
Inestimable drugs and precious stones,  
More worth than Asia and all the world beside ;  
And from the Antarctic Pole eastward behold  
As much more land, which never was descried,  
Wherein are rocks of pearl that shine as bright  
As all the lamps that beautify the sky !  
And shall I die, and this unconquered ?  
Here, lovely boys ; what death forbids my life,  
That let your lives command in spite of death.

Since the days of Ben Jonson it has been too much the habit of critics to cast ridicule or contempt upon 'the Tamerlanes and Tamer-Chams of the late age, which had nothing in them but scenical strutting and furious vociferation to warrant them to the ignorant gaper.' This last speech of Tamburlaine's, like some others that are given to him, is high and serious ; Hakluyt, who knew the fascination of the map, and

Serious import of 'Tamburlaine.'



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Gilbert, who gave his life in the cause of empire, might say Amen to it.

The  
Eliza-  
bethan  
temper.

The sense of liberty and power, and of belief in the capacity and destiny of man, which was quickened by the new discoveries, distinguishes the literature of the Elizabethan age from the great backward-looking periods of romance. It is a literature of youth and hope, with none of the subtle and poignant flavours that are to be tasted in a literature of regret and memory. If Marlowe may in some regards be fitly compared with Shelley, there is no counterpart in Elizabethan literature to the melancholy of Keats. Many old stories, it is true, were borrowed; mediaeval and classical fables were ransacked for themes. But Spenser's chivalry is a convention, and no true revival; he portrays his own age, and his own contemporaries, as they appeared to him; he too is concerned chiefly with the future. Plays like Dekker's *Olde Fortunatus* show the temper that animates Marlowe; the sober moral is almost forgotten in a maze of delightful wonders. But it would be wrong to regard a great literature as nothing

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more than the home and haunt of a thing so evanescent as the spirit of the age. Poetic imagination sits aloof, and studies enduring themes. Thomas Lodge wrote his gentle pastoral romance of *Rosalynd* on a voyage of discovery and pillage; George Sandys, being arrived off the coast of Virginia with the colonising expedition that succeeded at last, devoted his spare hours to the translation of Ovid. The New World did not obliterate the Old, and the new discoveries did not monopolise the thought of a century.

The un-  
changing  
themes of  
poetry.

In the case, therefore, of the greatest poet of all, Shakespeare, it is enough if it can be shown that his imagination was alive to this new world of speculation and opportunity. A poet's predilections are often more truly seen in his illustrations and digressions than in his choice of subject. Sir Walter Raleigh, for instance, in his long, dreary *History of the World* is kept far away from almost all that had engaged his active life. But when he is moved to passion, his mind reverts to the sea. The greatest passages of his book deal with death and mutability,

Raleigh's  
meta-  
phors.

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and continually illustrate human life from the experience of voyagers. 'When we once come in sight of the port of death, to which all winds drive us, and when by letting fall that fatal anchor, which can never be weighed again, the navigation of this life takes end; then it is, I say, that our own cogitations (those sad and severe cogitations, formerly beaten from us by our health and felicity) return again, and pay us to the uttermost for all the pleasing passages of our lives past.' And again: 'For myself, if I have in anything served my country, and prized it before my private; the general acceptation can yield me no other profit at this time than doth a fair sunshine day to a seaman after shipwreck, and the contrary no other harm than an outrageous tempest after the port attained.' Images like these, rising to the memory when the thought is most spontaneous and sincere, speak to the habitual workings of the mind, and are more convincing than the most elaborate descriptive sea-piece.

His  
habitual  
thoughts.

Shakes-  
peare and  
the sea.

Though he was inland bred, it is certain that Shakespeare knew and loved the sea. The

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handling of the ship in the *Tempest*, and the talk of the sailors in the storm-scene of *Pericles* have excited the admiration of experienced judges. The single grave charge brought against his competence as a navigator is based on the two allusions in the *Tempest* to the 'glasses' formerly used as a measure of time at sea, and now superseded by bells. From a comparison of these two passages it seems that Shakespeare believed that the glasses measured hours, whereas they measured half-hours.<sup>1</sup> He could not have made this mistake if he had been moderately conversant with life at sea. His

His single error.

<sup>1</sup>The passages are: Act I. Sc. ii. l. 240, where, just after the wreck, Prospero asks the time;

*Ariel.*

Past the mid season.

*Prospero.* At least two glasses. The time 'twixt six  
and now

Must by us both be spent most preciouslly,  
and Act V. l. 223, at the close of the play, where the Boat-  
swain reports:

Our ship,

Which but three glasses since we gave out split,  
Is tight, and yare, and bravely rigged, as when  
We first put out to sea.

There is a similar error in *All's Well that Ends Well*, Act  
II. Sc. i.

M

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habitual carelessness, it is true, may be invoked to save his reputation as a seaman. But many other passages of his writing testify rather to a love of the sea than to a love of navigation. Venus, when Adonis breaks away from her, is compared to

‘One on shore

Gazing upon a late-embarked friend,  
Till the wild waves will have him seen no more,  
Whose ridges with the meeting clouds contend:  
So did the merciless and pitchy night  
Fold in the object that did feed her sight.’

His  
sailors.

And his most famous descriptions, like that which occurs in King Henry IV's lament over the unattainable sleep, exhibit a marvellous power of poetic imagination and diction at work upon the material of common knowledge. The seamen, whom he sketches unerringly, were to be met on shore. A real sailor's chanty, unlike any other song in the Plays, is given to Stephano in the *Tempest*:

‘The master, the swabber, the boatswain, and I,  
The gunner, and his mate,  
Loved Moll, Meg, and Marian, and Margery,  
But none of us cared for Kate.’

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This little lyric, with its 'scurvy tune' suggests life ashore, in the taverns of Deptford and Wapping. There is more technical knowledge of the sea than might have been expected in Shakespeare's plays, but no exact inference can be drawn from it.

Allusions  
to the sea.

The extent to which the sea and sea-faring dominated the imagination of Shakespeare may be better judged in more indirect fashion, from his figures and allusions. It is not merely that in at least a dozen of his plays there are sea-faring characters, or voyages, or scenes laid on the sea-coast. There is none of his contemporaries whose works are so full of the sentiment of the sea. To take one play out of many that would serve equally well, in *Othello* the scene is laid at Venice and Cyprus, so that nautical affairs bulk largely in it. But this is not enough to explain the frequency and the magnificence of Shakespeare's allusions. The height of joy and of tragic passion constantly find their most adequate expression in metaphor taken from the sea. So in the meeting of Othello with Desdemona at Cyprus:

'Othello.'

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‘O my soul’s joy!

If after every tempest come such calms,  
May the winds blow till they have waken’d death;  
And let the labouring bark climb hills of seas,  
Olympus-high, and duck again as low  
As hell’s from heaven! If it were now to die,  
’Twere now to be most happy.’

So, again, in Othello’s reply to Iago’s counsels  
of patience :

‘Never, Iago. Like to the Pontic sea  
Whose icy current and compulsive course  
Ne’er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on  
To the Propontic and the Hellespont;  
Even so my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,  
Shall ne’er look back, ne’er ebb to humble love,  
Till that a capable and wide revenge  
Swallow them up.’

So, again, in Ludovico’s last apostrophe to  
Iago :

‘O Spartan dog

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea.’

In the greatness of Othello’s passion there is  
the lift and the wash of the sea ; in the inhuman  
treachery of Iago there is its cruelty and its  
mystery.

Borrowed  
names.

There is evidence enough, in well-known  
passages, of Shakespeare’s acquaintance with the  
discoveries of the voyagers. The name Caliban

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is almost certainly a distortion of Cannibal, and *Setebos* is a divinity of the Patagonians, described by Master Francis Fletcher, in an account of Drake's great voyage, as 'Settaboth, that is, the Divell, whom they name their great god.' But it was the reports brought home by the Virginian adventurers that set Shakespeare's imagination to work. The colony was planted in 1609; and the first Governor, Lord Delaware, was diligent in building towns and forts, and in bringing the Indians under control. Sir George Somers, deputy-Governor, was shipwrecked on the Bermudas, which were in ill-repute as the haunt of wicked spirits and foul weather, but were found by the castaways to be temperate, fruitful, and pleasant. The tale of these adventures, brought by word of mouth, or published in *The Discovery of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels* (1610),—a tract by Sylvester Jourdain, one of Sir George Somers' company,—gave the finest and subtlest wit in the world a theme for a play. The *Tempest* is a fantasy of the New World. It is

Virginia.

The  
"Tempest."



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sided to be called a satire, yet Shakespeare, almost alone, saw the problem of American settlement in a detached light ; and a spirit of humorous criticism runs riot in the lighter scenes. The drunken butler, accepting the worship and allegiance of Caliban, and swearing him in by making him kiss the bottle, is a fair representative of the idle and dissolute men who were shipped to the Virginian colony. The

Miranda. situation of Miranda was perhaps suggested by the story of Virginia Dare, grand-daughter of Captain John White, the first child born in America of English parents. She was born in 1587 and christened along with Manteo, one of the Indians who had visited England with Captains Amadas and Barlow. That same year she was abandoned, along with the other colonists. In 1607, when the settlement was next renewed, it was reported that there were still seven of the English alive among the Indians, 'four men, two boys, and one maid.' The strange girlhood of this one maid, if she were Virginia Dare, may well have set Shakespeare's fancy working. And the portrait of

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

Caliban, with his affectionate loyalty to the Caliban drunkard, his adoration of valour, his love of natural beauty and feeling for music and poetry, his hatred and superstitious fear of his task-master, and the simple cunning and savagery of his attempts at revenge and escape—all this is a composition wrought from fragments of travellers' tales, and shows a wonderfully accurate and sympathetic understanding of uncivilised man.

These travellers' tales gave a new import to the old fables of Arcadia and the Golden Age. The poetic idea of the original simplicity and virtue of man seemed to be confirmed by the warrant of sober fact, and steadily gained in acceptance, until, in the Eighteenth Century, it overturned the institutions and disturbed the peace of Europe. Montaigne, in his essay *Of Cannibals*, expresses the view of a philosophic observer. 'I find,' he says, speaking of the Indians, 'that there is nothing barbarous and savage in this nation, by anything that I can gather, excepting that everyone gives the title of barbarism to everything that is not in use in

The  
Golden  
Age.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

Mon-  
taigne on  
Cannibals.

The  
perfect  
Common-  
wealth.

his own country. . . . They are savages at the same rate that we say fruits are wild, which nature produces of herself and by her own ordinary progress; whereas in truth we ought rather to call those wild, whose natures we have changed by our artifice, and diverted from the common order. . . . I am sorry that Lycurgus and Plato had no knowledge of them: for to my apprehension, what we now see in those nations does not only surpass all the pictures with which the poets have adorned the Golden Age, and all their inventions in feigning a happy state of man, but, moreover, the fancy and even the wish and desire of philosophy itself; so native and so pure a simplicity, as we by experience see to be in them, could never enter into the poet's imagination, nor could they ever believe that human society could have been maintained with so little artifice and human patchwork.' Then follows the famous passage which Shakespeare borrowed for Gonzalo's description of his perfect commonwealth, in the *Tempest*. 'I should tell Plato,' says Montaigne, 'that it is a nation wherein there is no

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

manner of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name of magistrate or political superiority; no use of service, riches or poverty; no contracts, no successions, no dividends, no properties; no employments but those of leisure; no respect of kindred, but common; no clothing, no agriculture, no metal, no use of coin or wine; the very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, detraction, pardon, never heard of. How much would he find his imaginary Republic short of this perfection?

The humours of this ideal as a practical theory of colonisation tickled Shakespeare's fancy; the combination of the virtues of the Golden Age with that extension of trade and of sovereignty which was aimed at by the explorers made a delightful paradox; and he interrupts Gonzalo's speech with a running fire of scornful comment from the two men of sin. Yet he, too, came under the spell of the Golden Age, and, for all we know, would have been willing to say with Montaigne, 'I am sometimes troubled that we were not sooner

Shakespeare  
and the  
Golden  
Age.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

acquainted with these people, and that they were not discovered in those better times when there were men much more able to judge of them than we are.' He had always coveted a retreat from the struggles and clamour of the Court and city; but the retreats pictured in his later plays have a primitive simplicity which is lacking in the pleasure-gardens of the King of Navarre and the masquerading of the forest of Arden. Perdita, who, like Miranda, is prompted in all her words and actions by a plain and holy innocence, is something of a devotee of Nature. She will have no flowers in her garden, not the fairest of the season, if Art has had a share in their production; and she is deaf to the reproofs of experience. The religion in which Belarius, the upright banished courtier in *Cymbeline*, educates his adopted sons is a pure religion of naturalism; their brief ritual is performed as they come out from the cave where they house:

The  
religion of  
nature.

*Belarius.*

Stoop, boys: this gate  
Instructs you how to adore the heavens, and bows you  
To Morning's holy office: the gates of monarchs  
Are arch'd so high, that giants may jet through.

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And keep their impious turbans on, without  
Good morrow to the Sun. Hail, thou fair Heaven  
We house i' the rock, yet use thee not so hardly  
As prouder lives do.

*Guidarius.*

Hail, Heaven!

*Arviragus.*

Hail, Heaven!

*Belarius.* Now for our mountain sport.

In these rocks Belarius has lived, he says, for twenty years, and during that time has paid more pious debts to heaven than in all the fore-end of his life. A kind of weariness of institutions pervades Shakespeare's later plays; and it is easy to believe that the fascinating tales told by the voyagers quickened his longing for a simpler society, and contributed something to his magical descriptions of innocence and kindness, whether in the wizard's cell on the island, or on the shepherd's lawn in Bohemia, or in the cave among the mountains of Wales.

There is no catching Shakespeare in the act of theft; his creative power transforms and inspires all that it touches, and brings it obedient to his own thought. It is certain that he was a poet; and there certainty ends. But whether it count for much or little in the history of

Influence  
of the  
Voyages  
on the  
national  
imagin-  
ation.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

his thought, the great fact of the Voyages can never be neglected, nor its influence on the national imagination denied. In the partial and naked record preserved for us by Hakluyt are inscribed the deeds which for half a century excited wild emotions, kindled emulation in the young, provided strange food for the intellect, and gave strength and purpose to the activities of a nation. What this scholar or that learned we can only guess; but here was the school of the people. It was a great training-ground, and gave noble exercise to those qualities of strenuousness, high carelessness, and almost braggart magnanimity which are the distinguishing mark of the Elizabethans. In those days the prudential virtues hid their heads, to wait for a less stormy season, when coasting voyages for profit should come into fashion again. The poets and men of action vied with each other in the effort to outshine deeds with words, and to impoverish words with deeds. Both were fantastic and extravagant, but the morbid literary extravagance which refuses the test of action, and claims to be judged as a

The  
School  
of the  
people.



## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

thing apart, in a filigree world of its own creation, belongs to ages less full-blooded and vigorous and sane.

This great background and seminary of action gave its colour and character to the literature of the Elizabethan age. The later and lesser outburst of Romantic poetry at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century had origins curiously different. As the Voyagers were the begetters of the Elizabethan age, so were the Encyclopaedists of the age of revived Romance. The later movement had its impulse and inspiration from the long labours of critical thought and the hopes of awakening science. The poetry of the Nineteenth Century, unlike the poetry of the Elizabethans, began in reaction and protest. For three generations and more before William Blake struck the note that was to dominate Romantic poetry, the disciples of positive knowledge had been busy at their work of questioning, examining, undermining, condemning, without hesitation or remorse; and the poets of the new age were the rebellious children of the destroyer. Some of them,

The  
Age of  
Elizabeth  
and the  
Age of  
Revived  
Romance.

The  
poetry of  
reaction  
and escape.



## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

taking advantage of the conquests of critical knowledge in the domain of history, flung themselves back into the Middle Ages, and attempted to live as pensioners on the faith of a bygone time. Others, fired by the hope of a new happiness to be achieved by experimental science and philanthropy, lived in their dreams of the future, built cloud-castles of wonderful tenuity and beauty, and peopled bubble-worlds with phantoms of men. Almost all the poetry of the age is 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.' Those of the poets who, like Keats, celebrate the joys of the moment, for the most part regard these joys as a palliation only, a brief respite and escape from the prevailing melancholy. They glut their sorrows 'on a morning rose, or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave.' It is the distinction of Wordsworth that he alone among the greater poets did not renounce or blaspheme the age and the world, but found in it room enough for hope and faith and lasting joy. But the poetry of the age, taken as a whole, is disaffected—out of sympathy with the main motives that stir

Diseases of  
thought.

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

men to action, and liable to all the diseases generated by abstract thought. The worst of these, which attack only weak constitutions, producing kinks in the brain, and making men the fevered and querulous slaves of ideas they are not strong enough to master, may be discovered in not a few of the later followers and adherents of the Romantic movement. It was the misfortune of the age that, struggling in the meshes of thought, it found no sufficient opportunity for clear, united, whole-hearted, and decisive action. Some of its poets were ardent students of Godwin's *Political Justice*, a book alert and blind, full of vaporous casuistry, giving ample exercise to the logical faculty, and absolutely ignoring those passions, desires and powers, which are the breath of human life. The Elizabethan poets were happier in their teachers—they had Hakluyt's *Voyages*.

Godwin  
and  
Hakluyt.

When all is said, the chief influence of Hakluyt and his noble company must not be looked for in literature. Literature is only one expression of the imaginative life of a people, and not the most important. It is true that

The value  
of deeds.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

poetry can never be divided from action without paying heavy penalties. Only by keeping firm hold of that guarantee of sincerity which is supplied by the deed done can it steer clear of the slippery pitfall of rhetoric. But action is not dependent on poetry ; and the inarticulate generations who inherited and carried on the work celebrated in the Book of Voyages played for higher stakes than praise. It was almost an accident that the book was made ; the dynasty of Drake and Hawkins and Frobisher would have established its reign had it never found a chronicler. In 1736 proposals were issued for a reprint of Hakluyt, but support was lacking, and the scheme fell through. The first reprint, numbering three hundred and twenty-five copies, did not appear till 1811. It is the high reward of great deeds that they can afford to be forgotten. Fame is a luxury, if not a vanity. By secret and unconscious methods of initiation, by that unwritten tradition which descends from father to son, by the law of nature which gives currency to inherent value no matter whose the superscription, the ideas

Reprints  
of  
Hakluyt's  
book.

## POETRY AND IMAGINATION

and aims of the great Elizabethan seamen have become the creed of the British Empire. Yet Hakluyt's book, though it has little to do with the history of letters, gives, to those who care to read, a rare opportunity of insight into the hidden processes of the making of a nation. When it was first published all that had been imagined and attempted, at the cost of so many years of effort and so many men's lives, was yet to do. No thoroughfare had been discovered by the North East or the North West. No English community had been established oversea. No gold-mine was in the possession of England. The Spanish power was stronger on the seas than it had been before the Armada. So far the record is one of failure. But on the other side of the account there is an item which cannot be neglected. It is to be found in those long and dull lists of unknown names, of merchant promoters, gentlemen adventurers, intending colonists, and ship's companies, which give so business-like an air to Hakluyt's pages. It may be true, as someone has said, that these detailed summaries 'leave as little

A record  
of failure.

The  
warrant  
of success.

## THE ENGLISH VOYAGES

The  
island and  
the sea.

impression of excitement or emulation upon our minds as so many almanacks.' But they held in them the promise of Empire. The ideas of colonial expansion and of the command of the sea had captured the nation; the seeds had been scattered, and were germinating in tens of thousands of minds. From the sea England had been peopled by successive waves of conquest or immigration; to the sea, after a long interval, she gave back a race who had learned that there and there alone could her safety be made good and her name upheld. As a people—to borrow a phrase from the poetry of common speech—we follow the sea; it will be an ill day for us when the tides that wash the world run their ancient courses, and we may not follow.

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